

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Canada vs Cuba

Wednesday, 11 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Canada

Cal Quantrill

Abraham Toro

Otto Lopez

Postgame Press Conference



Canada 7, Cuba 2

Q. Cal, obviously one thing that your manager just said a couple of minutes ago, you were plan A for Canada. I guess this historical game to go through on the first round, how amazing that makes you feel to actually be plan A for Team Canada and trying to make history? And also to do it on a team that also includes your dad on the pitching staff.

Also for the other guys, how has this tournament been instrumental for what you're actually going to be facing moving forward, not only in the rest of the World Baseball Classic, but also in your careers?

CAL QUANTRILL: Everyone says it, but it's just such an honor to represent your country, to be with this group. A lot of these guys I've played with, played against, but we've always shared something special. I think we came here, and we knew that we had a special team, and we wanted to prove we both belong on the international stage, but we're capable of taking the next step, and I think we did that.

We were professional the whole time. We knew it wasn't going to be easy, and we showed up to play these last two days. Just really, really proud of the guys.

Such an honor to be here. Just so cool. Such a cool moment for Canada baseball, for a lot of guys that have been here for a long time.

We've got people in our training room and our equipment managers who have been doing this for 30, 40 years. I think to be able to see the smile on their face and know that we were able to give them something special is pretty cool.

Q. For all of you guys, Otto, let me start with you. We spoke to Justin Morneau pregame, and he laughed about what he thought was this hokey, inspirational speech that he gave to you guys. What did you take from his message? What resonated with each one of you when you heard Justin speak?

OTTO LOPEZ: From what he says, it was more like how this tournament, he said it so well -- we've seen like a lot of different things and just get out there and just fighting, give our 100 percent knowing that no matter what was coming, just facing -- we're just going to face it with each other.

I would say it was kind of like how we played the games back in the days when I was a kid. Just go out there and just have fun with your group of guys.

ABRAHAM TORO: Yeah, Justin is somebody that has been here before. He's been here as a player, now as a coach. He sent a big message, and we have a group chat. Just reading it before the game, it just gave me like goosebumps.

His preparation is something that I really admire. He's really locked in with the hitters. Every time the new pitchers come in and the way he takes it seriously as a coach, it just motivates you as a player to just give your best.

CAL QUANTRILL: I would just say the same thing as those guys. He's someone who's been there. He's been at the pinnacle of our sport, and there's nothing in the world he cared more about than us winning today. I think that's pretty special.

The fact that he probably doesn't even want anyone to know that he said something goes a long way. Yeah, I think these guys crushed it.

We were united in this goal. We showed up with a plan, and we did it. It's awesome.

Q. Otto, the game was so tight and you had the base



hit that breaks it open there. Can you describe what you were thinking when you were approaching that at-bat, and what you might have been feeling when the ball snuck through that 5-6 hole there?

OTTO LOPEZ: That was one of the guys I faced in Spring Training. At that moment, I had batted against him before, and I feel pretty comfortable in that at-bat when I had those two runs come in. I was prepared. I was prepared enough to feel comfortable enough to just get a good pitch and swing.

Good things happened, and I felt very good about it after that.

Q. You guys saw a lot of contributions from younger players. Just seeing guys like Denzel Clarke and Owen Caissie really have big moments in this tournament so far, what does that make you feel about the future of Canada baseball and the future of you guys in this tournament?

ABRAHAM TORO: Those guys, they're tremendous athletes and definitely future potential All-Stars in the MLB. To see them already being so young, already in the second Baseball Classic just shows the talent that we have in Canada.

Canada is definitely a country that is slept on. I just think that it's going to continue to grow, and hopefully we can be an inspiration for a younger generation.

Q. Tell me a little bit about how you feel after this victory and you guys bring a little bit of Latin blood to the team.

ABRAHAM TORO: To me, I've never played winter baseball. So I felt the Latin fans definitely. It's a very short tournament. We all felt it in the support that we've had, and we're very happy to win today's game and go on to the next round.

OTTO LOPEZ: To me it was a very special moment because the first time that I played here in Puerto Rico, I played winter ball. Today feels the same. I mean, the Latin flavor, and as he just said, I enjoyed a lot.

I had so much fun. I've lived through this in the past, and I just feel very happy that we can advance and compete against the great teams.

I believe that I'm never going to forget that.

Q. How did it feel to win these two huge games back to back, get the No. 1 seed. What kind of momentum is

that heading into Houston?

ABRAHAM TORO: It feels great. After that Panama loss, we knew that we didn't play our cleanest baseball. We just came together, and everybody was still so positive. We're like, hey, even though we didn't play our best, we still got two games to go, and we cleaned it up and played really good baseball the last two games and hopefully keep this momentum for the next round.

Q. Can you talk about some of the favorite messages of support you've received this week or just after this game from family, friends, fans back home? Have you had a chance to digest what this means for a lot of those people?

CAL QUANTRILL: Yeah, I had about a hundred messages on my phone that I haven't looked at quite yet. I had friends and family taking time off work. My family runs a car dealership. They basically shut down sales for the day to watch the game.

I think that the baseball community in Canada, it's a tight-knit community. It may not be the biggest community, but it's a tight-knit community, and they care a lot east to west coast. It's just special.

It's all over social media, I'm sure for these guys as well. Yeah, just an outpouring of love. Even the amount of Canadians that came out to Puerto Rico to watch us play is pretty special, beyond just our families. Yeah, I think this is a great moment for baseball Canada.

And I think Abe said it best, hopefully this is an inspiration to young players back home, whether it be East Coast, West Coast, wherever you're at.

We can compete on the biggest stage against country that's baseball is their No. 1 sport. We're not here for a participation ribbon. We're here to compete and play ball and win against the best countries in the world.

ABRAHAM TORO: For me just seeing my family here, they're taking time off. They were on the field. They were so happy.

As a player, you're just so locked in on winning a game, you just forget sometimes how big a deal it is. I just learned yesterday that I was going to the next round, and to do that, to be part of this group is definitely special. I think it's good for baseball overall and for the country for the next baseball players that want to be baseball players, the young guys.

Q. In terms of what a lot of other teams, especially

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Latin American teams, that underestimate Canada, yeah, it's hockey country but not a baseball country, today you guys actually proved you're a baseball country. You're here to compete, like you mentioned. Cal, what kind of message do you want to send to those teams to be ready for you in round 2?

ABRAHAM TORO: We really didn't pay attention to people saying we're not a baseball country. We're not worried. We're just worried about the game, and that's what we did in this tournament.

The message I can give you is that we have a mentality that we won't give up, and we're going to play hard regardless of who we play against from the first pitch.

OTTO LOPEZ: I could say something. I had never played ball in the Dominican Republic, and I started in Canada from the beginning. The baseball there is like anywhere in the world. Baseball is global, so it's everywhere.

The message I could say is that don't underestimate any team, and mostly in this tournament. Just like we're prepared, and I think 2023 we had an experience of the WBC that caught our eye that we wanted to advance, and that is very important for us also.

CAL QUANTRILL: Same.

(Laughter).

THE MODERATOR: You can't let them go before you because they're giving up all your answers.

Q. Abraham, we've seen the wind knock down balls here all week that got barrelled. I just wonder hitter approach-wise, when you see the wind, anything you try to do to hit the ball differently? And your ball today, were you worried the wind might hold that one back?

ABRAHAM TORO: We were definitely worried about the wind. It's not something that you think about as a hitter. If you change too much, I don't think it's for your benefit. The only thing I did, when I hit the ball in the air, I just ran as hard as I could because I knew possibly it would drop. In my last at-bat, that's actually what happened. They dropped the ball, and I was able to go to second.

Q. Cal, just watching you, you seemed determined that you were going to grab this outing by the throat and kind of dominate. I'm just wondering for you, as you're progressing there, what that felt like for you and how you felt with your stuff and how it was playing?

CAL QUANTRILL: We're all aware of the weather conditions, but I felt confident with the team I had behind me. I certainly wasn't going to allow walks to dictate this game, attack hitters, and let them play great D.

Yeah, I think the messaging was very clear from all of us. It's just if you barrel a ball and you're out, that's fine. Continue to take great at-bats. For pitchers, attack the zone. Make them beat us.

I think we played the cleaner game today, and it showed. We ended up on top.

Q. You mentioned already just the support from the Canadian fans here. I don't know if either of you all noticed that Caissie hit that home run into a Canadian flag. Toro, your home run also hit near a Canadian flag. Just wondered if you noticed.

ABRAHAM TORO: Actually, I didn't notice. I didn't even know the Caissie one, but it's good to know.

CAL QUANTRILL: Let's get some Canadian flags in Houston then (laughter).

OTTO LOPEZ: I did know that one. When I watched the video of Caissie's homer, it was exactly in between the two guys and hit the flag.

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