

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Great Britain vs Mexico

Friday, 6 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Mexico

Manager Benji Gil

Jonathan Aranda

Nacho Alvarez Jr.

Javier Assad

Postgame Press Conference

Mexico - 8, Great Britain - 2

Q. Nacho, what was going through your mind during that home run? You celebrated like very few players do, showing emotion. Why was that (indiscernible), your celebration?

NACHO ALVAREZ: I don't know. I really blacked out when I hit it. I think it's just an honor to represent this country. It means the world to my parents. I want to represent the country how they would. So whatever it takes to win these games, I am willing to do whatever it takes.

Q. For Benji and Nacho, first time that you guys opened the World Baseball Classic with a win. The importance of starting on the right foot, and also just what is the biggest takeaway from this game that it was a close one until that three run homer?

NACHO ALVAREZ: I didn't really know that until like five minutes ago. I think it is important to start off bracket play with the win. It sets the rest of the games up for us. We can do whatever we want now. I mean, yeah, it's just a good start I guess.

BENJI GIL: I knew longer than 30 minutes ago. Yeah. I didn't know that that had been the case, but I appreciate you guys for reminding me before the game that we had never won the first game.

Having said that, we had faith even when the game was tight and things weren't really going our way. They played great defense too. We hit three balls to the wall in right field. Thompson made -- the play he made on Assad, that



was an incredible play. That was a two-run double if he doesn't make that play.

They had more hits than us but we were having really good at-bats. We kept repeating in the dugout, just keep having good at-bats. It is going to come. It is going to come.

And credit to our players. They just kept battling and having good at-bats until we were able to get a couple walks. And then Assad came up and hit the bomb, which he could have been easily 3-for-4 or 3-for-3 at that point -- 3-for-3 with a home run, a double and a single.

Yeah, I think our at-bats got even better as the game went on. There's jitters. Some of these guys have never played in the game. Some have been waiting three years to put the uniform on again. I thought it was really good for our first game.

Q. (Indiscernible) Benji, what's the difference you see with him from three years ago until today?

BENJI GIL: Even back then he was an absolute stud. I think it was more of a situation of where to play him, right. Back then he played, the game he started, he played second. With the D-backs, he was playing some third, and we had Paredes Urias. And Joey was coming off of a great season or two months, two and a half months in the big leagues. So it was more of a situation of opportunities.

And I will be honest with you, I follow all of our Mexican guys during their seasons.

But last year, at the All-Star break, he was one of the top 10 hitters in all of baseball, doesn't matter where they're from or what position. And you can see the quality of his at-bats.

He is an All-Star -- he went to the All-Star Game last year. I think he is a perennial All-Star. I think he is going to end up being an MVP-type candidate hitter.

Q. (Indiscernible)



BENJI GIL: We come to the pressroom in the end we have to enjoy the victory because we have a free day tomorrow. Enjoy a little bit tomorrow. But once we wake up we have to start thinking about Brazil. We cannot under rate Brazil. We cannot just leave our focus off of Brazil. Since we have the first game we have to focus on the next game. Being here now we enjoy that we won but we are never going to underestimate any rival. The importance is that we start with the right foot and take it day by day.

Q. Benji, there were five separate innings where your pitchers were able to strand runners in scoring position. Can you speak to their ability to get out of one jam after another?

BENJI GIL: Yeah, and you know what, I think it would be a mistake not to mention Alejandro Kirk, the way he handled the pitching staff, the communication he had with our coaches between innings and with the pitchers.

I mean, I think he did an outstanding job today. It can be easily overseen, but that's why he is the superstar that he is.

But getting back to the pitchers, like Javier said, you know, they attacked the zone. Even they got behind counts or hitters on, they just trusted the defense, and our defense is pretty special.

And it is hard to say we are the best defense in the tournament, but it is also real difficult for somebody to point out a better defense than what we have. It's in the infield, it is behind the plate. It is in the outfield. And we saw the result of that. We some great plays by Joey, Randy throwing somebody out at home, nick made some nice plays. It was good all over the field.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports