

# World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Brazil vs Italy

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

## Team Italy

## Manager Francisco Cervelli

### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. The opening pitch today, do you have any expectations for the next upcoming games? You have players from Italy, players born in the U.S., Canada, Venezuela. How can a manager bring a team and make them feel like family?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: The rotation was already made. We're going to be changing it as days go by. Aldegheri will be the pitcher (indiscernible) who will be pitching tomorrow.

And as for the culture, I've been studying about this for a while living in Italy when I was a player. It's really hard for me to work on this because of the timeframe, it's very short. But I will still find a way for them to build chemistry and for them to get to know each other.

The thing about baseball in particular is that they've been knowing each other for a while, so it becomes easy to connect. So the day-to-day makes the team make these things happen.

**Q. Most managers take things a little by little, but now you're taking this country to be present on the map. How can a manager like yourself, without such a big resumé, make a team be so known?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: In 2022, I was on the coaching staff with a great coach. And then went to Italy after that. I don't think it's going to the minor leagues or anything like that. It's more of a learning experience, whether it's in Europe or anywhere else. So that was a challenge for me. And now I'm here and I have a coaching staff of many experienced coaches.

I have learned a lot from them. I'm always asking questions, and we take it day by day, little by little.

**Q. How beneficial is it for you to start off this tournament after seeing all four national teams yesterday? And how did your meeting go with the**



**players and the mixture within the team?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: First and foremost, I hope everything goes well. The fact that we have our games lined up the way they are, it's how that ended up being. But we have to be the best we can. We try to adjust every time on the field, get to know the players as we go.

And like I mentioned previously, it is a tough job because you don't know everyone, and then you have a short timeframe to get to know them. But as you go, you have a better idea on how to approach your opponents, who you're going to be facing.

**Q. Kyle Teel was in here earlier talking about working with Jorge Posadas. He watched him growing up. You talked about how valuable is it to have a guy like that mentor a young catcher like Kyle?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: That was the reason why I brought Jorge here. When I asked him, he didn't hesitate. He gave me the answer in five minutes. And I told Kyle and D'Orazio, get as much information as possible.

This guy knows about winning. This guy knows about the game. He played more than everybody else. He got five rings. So whatever you can take from him or from the whole coaching staff, it's going to be good for your career.

**Q. So what have you seen them working on? And how has it been like watching the two of them work together?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: It's just mentally, put information about the game, whatever we see Jorge approach him or D'Orazio and they learn new things, you know?

I always say this game is a chess game, especially the catching part. So that's what he's teaching. We've got no time to change anyone here. We've got to play games. We've got to win. But the little things that we can do to help, we will do it.

**Q. You have had a great career as a player. You**



**succeeded as a player. You had a fantastic career. What pushed you to start this adventure as a manager?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: In English or Italiano?

**Q. English because they have to understand.**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, as a player I enjoyed my time. I played two World Baseball Classics. This tournament is unbelievable.

As a manager, it's new emotions. What I like about this job is how we can put a group of young guys together, not only to play baseball, just to protect themselves, have each other's back. That's my passion about this job, you know, build a strong group, building a base, so when things go south, we know how to get out of the hole.

I'm very happy. This is going to be my first pro game and it's great. I like this job.

**Q. Do you believe that this tournament will be catapulting you to next Saturday's match, be able to get there?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Every game takes it to a different level. People start watching you, you get more attention from everyone else.

But right now I'm focused on where I'm at, focused on this tournament. After this tournament I'm going to go to Italy, stick with my plans, with the baseball from Italy.

I'm not sure what's to come. I'm just going to keep on preparing myself, concentrating and see what comes next.

**Q. What's it been like building this culture with this team, a lot of players from different backgrounds, kind of bringing them together?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: It's an incredible experience, especially for the guys that are coming from Italy. Like, when you walk in the clubhouse full of Major Leaguers, probably you feel a little intimidated.

But on this team, we have a great captain. This guy, he's real on bonding, on putting together a culture. Doesn't matter where you come from.

In this kind of tournament, you've just got to be one. And we don't have to love each other, but we have to respect each other and like each other. That's it. Baseball is all about this, and life is about this, too.