

# World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Brazil vs Italy

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

## Team Italy

## Manager Francisco Cervelli

### Postgame Press Conference

Italy - 8, Brazil - 0

**Q. Today you all made history -- the pitching, the batting, especially the innings -- and we've seen in the past and the way you celebration with the espresso coffee, who started that? How did it come about? Why this, the coffee machine?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: The coffee machine is because in Italy we drink coffee about 20 times a day. It's a tradition. You're walking down the road. You see a coffee spot, get some coffee, then you chitchat, and then keep walking and do the same thing all over and over again. That's how Italy is.

It could be emblematic but that's all the players. I had nothing to do with the players, to be honest.

**Q. We saw Leon (phonetic) a little bit higher in the lineup. Are we going to see more of him throughout the tournament?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: I'm not sure. We're going to have to see. I hope that comes to be, but it's a short tournament, that it gets harder and harder at the very top. And the thing is once the game starts, you have to line up, then say you get three outs and everything changes. No one is first, no one is second, because the game plays on.

**Q. Just like you said before, it's a short tournament. So whoever goes to the quarterfinals will face Mexico. Are you already looking forward to that?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: No, I'm thinking about tomorrow. Tomorrow's opponent, it's a tremendous opponent. They played really hard against Mexico. So we're taking things day by day. And we cannot be thinking about another team in four days if we have one tomorrow.

**Q. What did this game, do you think mean to Sam?**



FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, I know him probably more than a year, two years already. Everybody's proud of him. The first pitcher ever, pitching in the Major League for Italy. We had this idea a long time ago about this game for him. And he worked very well. He did an amazing job, and the people there are really happy right now.

**Q. My question was about Sam at first. Have you guys brought the espresso machine back in the dugout from the last WBC. Whose idea was it to bring that back and then work it into the home run celebrations too?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, in my tournaments in Europe, we got the espresso machine as well. It goes everywhere with us. It's something normal.

We got it on the bus. We've had it in the dugout, everywhere. And then we also bring parmesan cheese and olive oil. We put that everywhere.

**Q. In regards to your players, what did you see in Brazil's game? How did you see the game today? And regards to Manny Ramirez and Jose Contreras, how is that dynamic?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, we saw a team that gave a great fight against U.S.A. They have a great talent, up and coming talent. Their first pitcher was really good in that game. And they fought hard. They did a lot of change-ups.

One of the things I saw from Manny yesterday was spectacular. And Jose Contreras, I've been following him for a while. I am friends with his father. He's a great talent. I think in about four years we're going to see one of the biggest pitchers names out there. He has size, speed. He has it all.

**Q. (Indiscernible) a little bit slower in the beginning but they found their groove in the last part of the innings. What did you like about that, about your players getting better at-bats and better discipline at the plate?**



FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, I think it was slow because the pitcher was throwing well. We've got to give credit to the starting pitcher. But the guys, you know, the game 27 outs. You've got to make the adjustment. The guys did it. They let the other guys to throw a little more, to see more pitches. They got a little more patient, and then that's when the offense started to explode.

**Q. In Mexico they talk a lot about the players are not born in the country and then they end up representing their different national team. I think it's a different scenario with the Italian national team. How do you feel about your team in regards to the representation of its own country?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: With Italy, it happens the same. I mean, I think it's the same thing in Italy. They just don't talk about it a lot. There's people that are going to disagree in so many things. But the rule states that they allow players that have some sort of relation through, you know, birth or family, and they're wanting to play and give it all in order to represent a country, and that's fine.

I hope obviously to have more people being born in the country. But let's say a Manny Machado. He answered that Italians are born wherever the heck they want to be born at.

**Q. Today's opener, Sam Aldegheri, we know that his beginnings in the Major Leagues have really good tendencies, 5.9 through every inning. Today he looked very comfortable throwing strikes all the time, completing four. Is there specific training that you guys did with him?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, I know the main thing was that he works very hard throughout the winter. He has a great coach, Mr. Maddux, great pitching coach. They're working a lot on his control, throwing strikes in the inside zone, localizing. I think those things are very helpful.

And this game's about adjustments. The ones that remain in the Major Leagues for a while is because they have great discipline and they keep good work habits. And, so, yes we're very happy to see what he did today.

**Q. In regards to the Italian players, many of them were born outside of Italy, but since you're Venezuelan, how do you bring the Latin American blood to these players, and many, obviously, European players?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: I was born in Venezuela, right. And you breathe baseball. We carry that in our veins. I want Italian players to feel that same passion. But the

ones that play baseball in Italy are as passionate as I am, but the sport is not their number one sport out there.

So then what can we do for to have all these players to show who they are and become inspirations to many. Right now we have Scotti, Quattrini and Renzo Martini playing in the Classic tomorrow. In the future it can be someone else.

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