

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Great Britain vs Italy

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Great Britain

Manager Brad Marcelino

Najer Victor

Tyler Viza

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Almost exactly three years ago you were in the exact same position as today, started two very competitive games but down 0-2. What lessons do you take from that?

BRAD MARCELINO: That we can -- our brand of baseball, we can play, go toe to toe with a lot of different countries, a lot of different types of players. Yeah, I think we've shown that. I think it's just about how we execute the small details in the big moments. So these guys pitched their butts off yesterday.

So, yeah, we're in the same spot, but I think the trap is to kind of get too caught up in the future, the past. It's just kind of about today.

Q. Italy, a team you've seen a lot. Last time out, 11-10 in the 2023 European Baseball Championship. A couple of guys started that who are going to start today. What can you take from that last Italy game and the overall match-up with Italy?

BRAD MARCELINO: We've obviously had a long history playing them quite a bit. But I think it's still all about the play. It's about the play. It's about using some of the experience that we've had against them. But at the end of the day, it's about how well can we focus on what we need to do and it's just kind of us-versus-us mentality.

So that's just one thing that we talk about is the other side is the other side and this is about what we do. So that's where our focus is.

Q. Tyler, can you talk us through your emotions from that Trayce Thompson play?

TYLER VIZA: Yeah, I think everybody saw it. It was



probably one of the most incredible catches that I've been on the beneficiary side of that.

He and I talked about it for innings on end yesterday during the game. It was actually an incredible play. Rewatched it multiple times last night. In the moment, it didn't feel like it happened as fast as it did. It almost felt like time stood still for 10 seconds at least. And then he pulled the ball out. But it was absolutely an incredible play.

Q. And did you realize that he caught it, initially, because he took a long time to show the ball?

TYLER VIZA: Yeah, it was interesting. I told him that it kind of looked like the fans in the front row didn't really know where the ball was. I feel like if the ball had made it over the fence, that they would have gone ballistic looking for the ball and all that stuff.

So when all of it was happening, that kind of went through my head. Then he pulled the ball out, and I gave the reaction I gave. It was incredible.

Q. Najer, you struck out a lot of the best hitters on Team USA. You looked pretty pumped up doing it. What was it like for you being there? How did you want to attack them, and what was the emotion like for when you were facing those guys striking them out?

NAJER VICTOR: It was kind of surreal, I guess. I give all glory to God because it's not possible without him. But it was fun being out there wearing these colors, given the opportunity to play on a stage like this was fun. That's what was going through my head all the time.

We had a meeting about our whys and everyone else's whys, and getting to know the guys. It's easy to play for the guys around you, but not just for yourself. I think when I was out there, that was running through my mind, just playing for the guys that are behind me.

Q. Was there one particular at-bat or one particular strikeout that you think was your best at-bat of the night or that stood out to you?



NAJER VICTOR: I liked the 3-2 slider to Gunnar Henderson. I think that was -- I mean, tossing the ball out, slowing the game down, and hearing the crowd chanting "USA." Visualized it -- something you can never really visualize fully until you're actually there. The game slowed down for me a lot. None of it's possible without God.

Q. And he had just stepped out right before that pitch, and then there was all USA chants were going on and you came back and struck him out? That was a big one.

NAJER VICTOR: That was definitely, probably the biggest moment of my life, I would say. Yeah, for sure.

Q. Tell us a little bit more about baseball back home and then also what your performance here means for the growth of baseball in the islands?

NAJER VICTOR: I come from a small island, 32 square miles. It's probably, like, 25-30 minutes, each, from end-to-end. A small community. Having the support from back home, that was kind of part of my why. And also not just my why but also other small islands -- just watching what Jazz does, that's something that I aspire to do one day. He's not just doing it for the Bahamas, but for all the islands.

We play the game of baseball, it's a small world. But also for me, having the meetings with the kids in London, that's all I ever asked to do is inspire people and knowing that it is a way.

Q. For the two players, you looked down the first time you put on that GB jersey, the actual game jersey, what was going through your head?

NAJER VICTOR: For me, it was being grateful. There's guys that played and wore this jersey for me to even get a chance to play on this stage. Kind of talked about it with some of the players, those players maybe felt like they were stripped of opportunity, so I don't want to take anything for granted or just play the game not to my best ability or full -- I guess, like, playing all nine is the biggest thing and tipping the cap and thanking those guys that paved the way.

TYLER VIZA: Yeah, I mean rewinding the clock back to the original qualifiers back in 2022, in Germany, I was asked to go play on that team, I was playing overseas in Taiwan. But I mean, they really set the tone, you know, for what we're putting forward right now.

Obviously I toed the rubber in '23. We got that first win

against Colombia, and it was massive. I mean, you could see the reaction from everybody in the dugout. There are a lot of new players this go-around compared to the last WBC. And from everybody that's back home and has worn the Great Britain jersey, it's, honestly, a privilege for all of us who are in between those white lines right now and sharing this dugout in the locker room. From my standpoint yesterday, just trying to wear that on my back yesterday and just really do it for the country.

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