

# World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Great Britain vs Italy

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

## Team Italy

## Manager Francisco Cervelli

### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. So you and Great Britain both are coming off different trajectories -- Great Britain starting with the U.S. and Mexico; you all going into this after Brazil. Does it benefit you all more to have those games first, or do you think that will be more of a test with them having the tougher competition first?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, we're going to get it after, so I don't think if you play against them before or after matters. You've got to face them no matter what. It looks tough, tougher for them, but they play good games. They are tough, too.

**Q. Dante Nori, from the bottom of the order to the top of the order, was it just because he hit the two homers and you wanted to reward him for that, giving him leadoff?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Berti is not in the lineup, so I moved Nori on top. This guy gets on base a lot. That's the reason. Two homers, of course, he's a great player, and I've got no doubt. That's why he was in the lineup yesterday.

Still a young guy, but I trust him. And I put him there just because if he's on bases, he will be a threat.

**Q. Berti not in the lineup, Caglianone also not in the lineup. What's the thought process there?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: That was my thought today, put a couple more lefties in. Everybody has to play. Trying to figure out a way to put everybody in the lineup.

But even if they don't start, it doesn't mean that they're not going to play. So they've got to be ready the whole game. Anything can happen.

**Q. So they're all good? No one's hurt or anything? You just wanted to get other guys in?**



FRANCISCO CERVELLI: No one. Everybody is good.

**Q. Can you tell us about your feelings yesterday at the beginning of the game, your inner feelings during the hunt, during the preparation of the game, what you felt at the time?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, the same butterflies that I used to feel when I played. It was amazing. I think if you don't feel that, you're not a human, and you get too comfortable.

I like feeling that -- probably people can say you're scared or nervous or whatever. But those butterflies, that means you get more focus and that means you're still loving this game.

**Q. Which are the main differences, thinking about having this pregame as a manager or having the pregame as a player at this level of the World Baseball Classic?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: The only thing is I'm responsible for this team. Anything that happens is my responsibility, good or bad. I have to be with you guys every day. As a player, you don't have to; you just prepare yourself for the game and not worry about this. But this is fun, too. I like it.

**Q. Great Britain and Italy have faced off quite a few times before, the European Championship, stuff like that. Is there a little bit of a European rivalry developing? If so, is that good for baseball in Europe and baseball on the global stage to have more of these kind of rivalries, if you will?**

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, as mentioned before, in Europe, it's not only Netherlands anymore. Like, Great Britain got better. They won the under-23. We end up fourth. France is getting better. Israel is getting better. Everybody is getting better.

Baseball is growing. Czech Republic as well. But this team right now, it's unbelievable. It's an amazing team.



They can play baseball. They know how to do it. They've got power on the mound. So, you know, it's a tough rival right now.

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