

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Mexico vs United States

Monday, 9 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team United States

Manager Mark DeRosa

Alex Bregman

Pregame Press Conference



Q. Alex, when you're back home with the U.S., as the home team, but the ambience, the environment is going to be very different with the Mexican crowd, how do you feel?

ALEX BREGMAN: I feel good. Houston fans love baseball. I do too. And I'm ready for a good game.

Q. Mark, can you share any conversations that you've had with Tarik since his start on Saturday? And have you guys formulated a plan for what's next for him?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah. We walked through the scenario the entire season. And with him agreeing to come and pitch against Great Britain, we were always under the assumption that he was going to leave after pool play.

I know that kind of got clouded a little bit because getting on the mound in the USA jersey, being in the room with these guys, is special. But he's going to leave after tonight and go back to Lakeland and be at Tigers camp.

Q. Will he pitch again in this tournament?

MARK DEROSA: No, he won't.

Q. Alex, I've seen you in the cage talking with Aaron specifically a lot. Is he a baseball mind you enjoy chatting with? And what about him in that way is something you enjoy?

ALEX BREGMAN: For sure. Obviously one of the best players to have played this game. And I feel like he's super knowledgeable about the swing, about the game of baseball in general.

So definitely not taking this opportunity for granted, and trying to pick his brain as much as I possibly can about hitting or anything to do with the game of baseball.

It's been great. Really enjoyed the conversations, the baseball conversations. And it's been awesome to be in that room.

Q. Mark, in your game plan, how many innings do you expect to have Paul Skenes on the mound tonight?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, he's capable of going five, if the pitch count's right. But we'll kind of, in-game, make that decision, myself and Andy Pettitte.

Q. What has been your favorite thing of the WBC til now? And what would you say to those players that are thinking about playing or doubting about not playing WBC? Would you recommend them to play?

ALEX BREGMAN: Yeah, definitely recommend to play in the WBC. My favorite thing about this tournament is the honor of representing your country.

We have a bunch of guys in that room that are proud to be American and proud to represent our great country. And we feel fortunate to be able to take the field with the stars and stripes on. And we don't take that opportunity for granted. And we are going to leave it all out on the field.

Q. Mark, two quick questions. First one, seeing how the game between the United States and Mexico ended the last time you guys played, do you see this as some sort of payback game for you guys? The second one, yesterday, Benji Gil made some remarks about your comments about having the best players in the world. He pushed back on the idea. He said DR, Japan and Venezuela might have something to say, and we don't care about the best players in the world; we care about having the best players in the game against them. What are your thoughts on that?

MARK DEROSA: My thoughts on that are, my day job is I work in the media, so I understand how one little snippet of what is said can get taken out of context.

The question was, how do you approach it without their

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pitcher being -- they hadn't named their pitcher yet. For me I just said, I don't care who is pitching for them, we're going to worry about us. That was the answer. If that's used as bulletin board material, that's not what I was doing.

Ton of respect for Mexico. Ton of respect for the way they played together in this tournament. They've beaten the United States I believe three out of the last four times.

I remember 2023 vividly. I remember Joey Meneses' two homers, Randy Arozarena, all of it.

I have a ton of respect for their players. They're fantastic. A ton of respect for Benji.

I just have a ton of confidence in the guys in our room. And that's what I was just trying to convey.

So, no, I don't see it as payback. I see it about worrying about winning the bracket, winning our pool and advancing.

Q. Back with Tarik Skubal, it was such an emotional decision for him. Do you kind of stay away from it and try not to influence?

MARK DEROSA: I did. And I did it with every player here. They've got to be here under their own want-to. I can't be the reason they're sitting in the room. That's just too much, I would think.

I would be worried about every pitch he throws. I know what's at stake for him. I'm over the moon he decided to show in the first place for us -- I really am -- and take the ball for us. I think it meant a lot to a lot of guys in that room. We know where his heart is. If he was in a different situation, he wouldn't be leaving.

But I also understand that 99.9 percent of the guys, if given his ability to get to free agency and just generational wealth on the table and everything he's got in front of him, a chance to win three Cy Youngs in a row, I was proud that he even showed for us.

Q. Looks like the whole Air Force baseball team will be here to watch Paul pitch. There's a report out there earlier that Paul and Griffin may have gotten them all tickets. Is that true, do you know?

MARK DEROSA: I don't know that to be true. I would assume that's true, yeah, I don't know. It's true.

Q. I was wondering what it might say about those guys --

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, they're special guys. I had special conversations with both of them. Obviously their process is a little bit different than the rest of the guys in the room, living that military background and going to school and attending Air Force.

I know in my talks with both of them, every guy in that room is proud to represent the United States of America. But the conversations with them were a little bit different, as far as wanting to represent every serviceman and woman who protects our freedom on a nightly basis. They're thinking a little bit different.

Q. Alex, last time you played in the WBC, y'all won the championship. Who were the leaders on that team? And have you been able to draw anything from them that you now can lead this team?

ALEX BREGMAN: Looking back on that team, I felt like -- that's a really good question. I can't really pinpoint one because I feel like everybody kind of led in their own way.

And I feel like it's kind of the same thing with this ballclub. I feel like we've got a lot of guys who obviously have a lot of confidence in each other and themselves and have won and are baseball players.

I feel like that team was full of baseball players that found a way to win baseball games. And I feel that's kind of the makeup of this team as well.

Q. Alex, I saw you nodding your head when DeRosa was talking about Skubal and his decision not to continue. He talked about the support you guys have given him for whatever decision he makes. Was it easy just to be on his side regardless of what decision he made?

ALEX BREGMAN: 100 percent. Tarik's awesome, awesome human being, awesome player, one of the best pitchers in the world. And we kind of all understand the situation that he's in. And whatever decision he was going to make, we fully have his back.

We were, like Mark said, we were thankful that he even showed up to pitch a single inning for us.

We know where his heart is. We know how tough a decision it is to make. We fully respect every single guy in that room.

Q. Mark, to follow on that, do you think that the situation with Tarik might come up again in future tournaments and might even become a regular thing?

MARK DEROSA: I think it's all case-by-case scenario, I really do. But you certainly have to understand his situation. Your heart wants to stay in the room with the guys. I talked to him for about 45 minutes yesterday at Constellation Park where we worked out, myself and Andy. And you could tell he was struggling with it. And we were just, like, this has got to be your decision, it's got to be your family's decision. At the end of the day, we'll support you either way.

I'd love for him to pitch a championship game. Who wouldn't? He was throwing 98-mile-an-hour bullets the other night with devastating offspeed stuff.

But I understood when he was coming in, and we were prepared for him to leave.

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