

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Italy vs USA

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Italy

Vinnie Pasquantino

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Did the whole situation of saying hi to players during the game, how do you feel about that?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: I probably have a different opinion than most guys. I'm good with whatever. I guess I don't really have a strong opinion on it. If you want -- I'm a talker. I know I annoy some catchers because I'll talk the whole at-bat.

I know some older players don't like it, meeting up in center field, things like that. But I'm still here to compete. I'm still here to win. That doesn't change.

I've always looked at it, like, I'm just here being myself. I don't want to change who I am once I step in between the white lines. But I know some guys that gets them going, it gets them ready for the game.

My opinion on it is do whatever you feel is right. There's kind of no rules when it comes to it. You've got to do what you've gotta do to be ready to play the game. And for different guys, that's different things.

Q. Were you at all surprised at how interested people were in the fact that y'all had the espresso machine in the dugout?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: It kind of blew up in 2023 just from having it in there. So I knew people would be interested in it just because they were interested in all the celebrations.

I think it kind of comedically worked out that they were too hot the first day. So people were spitting them out. Now it's like, what are they drinking. (Laughter).

But it is just coffee. I'm not spiking it with anything other than coffee. So it was just too hot. We made an adjustment, and we did better two days ago. It's Spring Training for everybody, right?



Q. Are any of the guys having trouble going to sleep at night because you're drinking too much?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: I hope not. Since our games are at noon, I hope they could come down from it. But I saw something that Dante Nori said he either didn't sleep the night after or the night before, I wasn't sure which one it was. Hopefully it was the night before and he was able to get some sleep the night after.

But I guess if sleeping two hours for him works, he should keep doing it every day if he wants to keep playing like this.

Q. As one of the bigger names on this roster, anything can happen in baseball, we all know. But is this kind of how you guys envisioned it, duking it out with Mexico and the U.S., three teams looking for two spots to move on?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yeah, I think for us, it's a tale of two different halves of the tournament, so to speak, of two games that you're more so supposed to win and two games you're not supposed to win.

But it's baseball, like you said. And that was a common theme for us, where it's like, guys, it doesn't matter who we're playing, we have to go in, one, expecting to win every single game; but, two, be ready to win those games, because, I mean, against Brazil, it was 0-0 in the fifth or something like that. Anything you know anything could happen at any given time.

For us -- and we went down early against Great Britain 2-0 in the first. And you can't panic. You know you've still got 27 outs on offense to go.

I think for us, that's kind of been the theme of the tournament, is a little bit of a slow start and then get going late, which obviously you'd prefer to just be going the whole time.

But we're not treating this game any differently than we did the other two, because I think that would be a disservice.



We're taking this game seriously the same way took the last two. And we're ready to go.

Q. Branching out, what you were saying, this game in particular, with that lineup, and you know so many guys over there, it's a little different than some of the other countries. So just for you personally what's the experience like of going up against Team USA?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: It's awesome. You look across the dugout and it's full of All-Stars and MVPs, full of Cy Youngs, full of everything. It's who you want to play against.

So I mean, it's an honor to take the field against them the same way it's an honor to take the field against anybody. And it's just really special.

And we have an opportunity to beat them. So we're taking the same field tonight. The only difference is we're hitting first, they're hitting second. They get to hit last, so to speak.

We're a good team, too, and we've just got to believe in it and be ready for the challenge, because it is going to be challenging.

So to get through this lineup, 27 outs worth, is not the easiest thing to do. But I know our pitchers are ready. And Lorenzen is ready to go tonight.

Q. You mentioned Dante Nori. For all the guys with big league experience that are on your roster, how impressed have you been with some of the prospects that maybe people are kind of seeing for the first time?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Well, candidly, they're carrying us. So it's been awesome. For the most part, that's who's done most of the damage on offense is the prospects. It's been great to see the confidence that they have. Fischer is a treat, the way he carries himself. He's awesome. Dante Nori is awesome. Sam Antonacci is awesome.

I can't say enough good things about these guys. It makes me feel old saying this, just like the game's in good hands, like with some of the guys coming up that I've been able to have the pleasure to get to know the past few days, past week.

They care. That's all you can ask for. It's a little bit more of showmanship maybe, I guess, is the word, but it doesn't come from a bad place. It comes from a great place of wanting to win for your team and just being proud to be here. So it's been awesome to watch those guys go to work.

Q. I know you did a great job recruiting for Team Italy, how close did you feel you got with Roman Anthony?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Not that close. But we at least had the conversation. And he's been doing a great job. There's a reason why we wanted him so bad, right?

So he's been great for them. Would have been awesome to have him in Italy blue. But he's doing a great job representing the Stars and Stripes. And it's been cool to see him break out a little bit -- not that it's a breakout. I mean, there's a reason, like I said, that we wanted him. So it's been really cool to see.

I was messing with him the other day a little bit -- I got to see him, said some things to him which I thought was funny; I don't know if he did or not, I haven't been able to catch up with him since. But we were having a conversation at least. Who knows how far, but he made a good choice.

Q. What are the challenges and the opportunities for Italy, the Italian baseball system and the team facing today USA. This could have a big impact. What could you tell us about that?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: About playing USA, like representing Italy playing USA.

Q. Yes, and the fact that this game, if you succeed, could have on the Italian baseball system.

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yes, this game's obviously important in that regard. But I think the most important part is Francisco Cervelli and Marco Mazzieri, the way they run this team, the way Marco runs FIBS. It shows kids in Italy, like, it's possible.

When this is over, I don't know how much Francisco talked yet or not, but he doesn't do what he's doing. He doesn't have to just show up and coach his team and then leave. Like when we're done, he's going to go over to Italy and he's going to be engrained in the development over there. And he'll be driving buses and he'll be doing things like that and essentially, to the American eye, like no-name Italian cities, just trying to create a culture of baseball in Italy.

And this is probably the most high-profile game that I've been in -- no that's not true; playing in Japan was probably more high profile than this, just in terms of being in Tokyo and the amount of televisions we got across.

But what those guys are doing for Italian baseball is incredible. And I've been on record as saying the goal for

this -- and I know people have their different opinions on the Classic. And for me, my opinion is we're bringing baseball to people and we're trying to bring people together.

We want the Italian team to be full of Italian players, from Italy, speaking Italian, all of it. That's what we want. We also want it to be a competitive team and we're trying to show that it's possible.

It's a great opportunity for a lot of us to play in these meaningful games in this time of year. And it's also an opportunity for us to show kids in Italy that this is possible.

What Sam Aldegheri did the other day, incredible. What Gabriele Quattrini, what he did the other day, incredible. And we've got a few other guys, Matteo Bocchi is here. Andres, I don't know how to say his last name, he's here. Renzo Martini, he's here.

So there's a lot of guys that are involved that aren't Italian Americans that are purebred Italians, so to speak, and that's who we're doing this for. We're not doing this for ourselves. We're doing this to try to create a culture in Italy to create a better baseball environment so that it's more possible for baseball to blow up there and to then have them come play in this tournament.

Q. You had the chance to play in the Dominican Winter Bowl, obviously MLB, and the World Baseball Classic. You talk about Japan. What can you say about the atmosphere of these games in Houston?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: It's been incredible, but I would like to talk to the people of Dominican Republic real quick.

Please have me back one day. I'm looking right into the camera, like, I'm so sorry for how poorly I played in that tournament -- or in that league. I got kicked off that island very quickly with how poor I played. So I'd love to come back one day and show that I can go.

I know Vama Licey and Licey Campeon, it was an honor to represent Licey. The Dominican was awesome. But, yeah, it's kind of crazy thinking about all the places that I've played in international, between Japan, Taiwan, Dominican, I mean, it's crazy to think of all the places, going to Italy with FIBS a few years ago.

It's an incredible experience. The environment here has been awesome. I assume we're going to see a bit of a different environment tonight and tomorrow than we saw against Brazil and Great Britain.

But those games are awesome, too. I'm really excited to

see the crowds. Even at the hotel, there's a lot of Mexico fans staying at the hotel, and they've been awesome just walking through the lobby, meeting new people. It's been really special. This tournament is just so special, and having 20 teams being able to congregate and play in this tournament, I mean, there's nothing like it. It's an honor to just be involved with it because it's super, super cool.

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