

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Italy vs USA

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Italy

Sam Antonacci

Jac Caglianone

Postgame Press Conference



Italy - 8, USA - 6

Q. How does it feel to be part of a night that will forever be remembered in Italian baseball history?

JAC CAGLIANONE: It's definitely something special, this past winter at the IBF Gala, Cisco and Marco and everybody were telling me how important it would be to get this team together and have a good shot at playing against Team USA and beating Team USA. And it was a very special night for sure.

SAM ANTONACCI: Yeah, definitely. As much as looking at it on the outside, just from an audience, I think a lot of people would say it's an upset. But to us, it was kind of expected. And it's nice to win, but we're looking already to tomorrow and game-planning for that.

Q. Jac, that was a pretty monster bat flip. What's going through your mind when you hit that ball?

JAC CAGLIANONE: Yeah, hit it, felt really good. Kind of knew I got it. Pine tar was a little sticky, if I'm 100 percent honest with you. Tried to release it, and my glove just wouldn't open until it got a little too high. So I saw it fly. And it was just one of those, I regret that.

But in the moment it was awesome. It fired up the guys. Almost hit one of them. But it's part of the game, I guess, in a way. But it definitely wasn't intentional, to say the least.

Q. Sam, I read that you really hit the weight room hard during the offseason, and it shows with a couple homers during Spring Training and demonstrating your power swing here with Team Italy. What's your mindset when you put on the Azuri uniform as far as, have you ever had any experience like this before?

SAM ANTONACCI: No, not at all. Just to be able to go out here with these 30 guys, wear Italy across your chest, it means more than you would think.

But just all of us, we all have the same mindset. We don't really need all the bells and whistles. We're just kind of a gritty group, I would say. And we just love playing baseball.

And I think that showed tonight and just doing the little things right and just wanting to win. We're here to win, we're here to play, and we're just here for the love of the game.

Q. We see the jacket and the espressos in the dugout, but what are some of things behind the scenes that have made this experience special, the way this team has bonded together? Are there certain things you can share with us that have been fun behind the scenes?

JAC CAGLIANONE: Yeah, we were talking about it in the dugout today, actually. Despite having the Major League players that we have on this team and the high prospects and all that type of stuff, nobody on this team comes in with an ego, expecting to be treated differently because who they are, what they've done throughout their career.

And I think that's something that a lot of these guys are going to take pride in. You kind of put whatever you did aside, and we're all fighting for one common goal and that's to win and to keep going as long as we can and wear this uniform. So that's probably the biggest thing, I think, that would go on behind the scenes outside the celebrations and stuff.

SAM ANTONACCI: Yeah, I would say, correct me if I'm wrong, I'd probably just say Vinnie and his leadership, I think, you know, some of us have had some big swings between the three games and just the time that we've spent together, I would say Vinnie is the MVP. And looking at his stats, I don't think he has a hit.

But he's made us all feel comfortable and he's the reason



that we're so tight. And anything you throw over there at first base is getting picked. He's played an awesome first base. He's a great leader. And I think he's our MVP so far.

Q. When you think about this being the biggest win in Italy baseball history, has that kind of sunk in for you?

JAC CAGLIANONE: For sure. Like I said earlier, they've been talking about this for a long time. To be able to get all these guys together and be able to be the team that does that is super special, and I think, yes, we have a bunch of Italian Americans on this team, but I think it goes back to kind of the country itself, putting Italy kind of on the map and showing everybody worldwide that we're here; we are competitive guys. We work hard. And definitely a lot of talent that I feel like is starting to get more noticed.

Q. You don't get this far without being confident. But can you take me through the mindset of going into this game and seeing Aaron Judge and all those stars on the other side. Does that motivate you? Does it inspire you? What's the feeling for you guys to see the men you saw cross the diamond?

SAM ANTONACCI: Just the same game. I mean, we're all human. We're all out there playing the same game. We all woke up this morning, had breakfast, all doing the same thing. So at the end of the day, it's just who wants it more, and today I think we showed that a little bit more and made the plays got a couple of bigger hits than they did and ultimately just won.

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