

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Italy vs Mexico

Wednesday, 11 March, 2026

Houston, Texas, USA

Daikin Park

Team Italy

Aaron Nola

Postgame Press Conference

Q. Can you tell us about how can you -- tell you about your experience on tonight's game, Italy was able to face a better team like Mexico and the U.S. Now it's your turn, this magnificent job today. How do you feel about today's victory?

AARON NOLA: The environment was really cool. It's a playoff atmosphere. I've been over here during the playoffs. And it's pretty awesome. I feel like nobody felt like we were going to make it out of pool play besides us. And I mean what a great couple wins these past two days.

And very fortunate to be on this group and representing Italy. A good Mexico team over there. I face those guys quite a bit over my career, and they're a scrappy, good team.

But we played really good tonight, and we did the little things right. And that's why we took the win.

Q. Did you hear from Bryce or Kyle before the game or last night, like, hey, help us out here by pitching well so we get in too?

AARON NOLA: No, I didn't. I didn't hear from them. I don't think anybody in the clubhouse was worried about USA getting in or not getting in. We were just focusing on the game. We're not going to go out there and try to score a certain amount of runs or do this and that just because of another team.

It's a big league baseball game. We're going to go out and try to win it however we can. We're going to go out and try to win a baseball game, and that's what we did tonight.

Q. What were you able to do tonight pitch-wise that was so effective at getting them out?

AARON NOLA: I got ahead pretty well, I feel like. The fastball had a little jump to it early on. And I felt the



command was there, so it set up my curveball. My curveball felt pretty sharp. Got some guys out in front and swinging over it.

Guys made some good plays, a couple double plays there, which was awesome. It helped out a lot. I feel like I found the zone pretty well.

Q. Just as a function of the schedule, Mexico had the deeper, more rested bullpen going into this game. Did that play into your thoughts at all in terms of the importance of just being efficient and doing as much as you can?

AARON NOLA: No, I just wanted to be efficient for Italy, and I wanted to get focused taking it hitter by hitter, how I always do. It's kind of my goal every game, to slow things down and to command all my pitches. And it worked tonight.

Q. Last year you spent a lot of time in the IL. Physically, how do you feel after pitching five innings for the first time this spring?

AARON NOLA: I feel good. I feel really good. I think the atmosphere and the stakes of the game made it a little bit easier to go out there and throw five innings, 60-something pitches.

It's obviously a little bit different than a spring training start. A little bit more fun, I feel like. But overall, the body feels good. My arm feels really good.

Q. You've been on some great teams. This environment, this experience, you guys are all together a couple weeks. What has made this team different in your eyes, the way it's come together so quickly?

AARON NOLA: Everybody's bought in. These games matter a lot. We take it one game at a time. Win one game each day, and that's kind of the mindset in that clubhouse. And everybody has a lot of energy going into each game, and I think that helps a lot.



Q. Did you know Vinnie much at all before this tournament and what's it been like sharing the clubhouse with him the last nine, 10 days?

AARON NOLA: Did I know him at all?

Q. Yeah, did you really get to know him much?

AARON NOLA: I've never met him before. Just played against him a few times. But he's great. Just kind of everything I thought he would be, just from playing against him. And just hearing guys from around the league talk about him, how good of a leader he is, teammate.

He brings a lot of energy every day. Good baseball player. What a game he had today with the three homers, you don't see that too much, especially on a game like that that we just played.

But he runs a clubhouse, and he gets everybody up and going every day.

Q. You knew coming in probably you were going to be playing this last game. You sat there with the team for effectively, like, three or four days watching them play. What was it like for you to be able to put on the Italian national jersey? And what does that mean for you and your family?

AARON NOLA: Yeah, it was about seven days since the last time I pitched. So I was honestly glad to just kind of watch the first few days, practice with the guys for two days and then watch the first three games, you know, especially the USA game last night. And obviously Mike, that I played with, pitching really well.

Our starters set the tone all four games, I feel like.

But wearing "Italy" is definitely an honor. I'm honored that they asked me to play in this. And I just had a ton of family here tonight. So on my dad's side the family's Italian.

It means a lot. It really does. And I'm glad to represent Italy with the best character as I can, and the best I can.

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