

# World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Czechia vs Korea

Wednesday, 4 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

## Team Korea

### Ji-Hyun Ryu

Pregame Press Conference

**Q. Regarding WBC tournament, this has been the 20th year anniversary, since the first tournament you've played hard at the WBC. When you look back at the WBC tournament as a skipper, how do you feel about and how do you make a comment representing Team Korea?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, I have been coaching for quite a long time. I still remember my first WBC in 2006, as well as 2013 tournament. As a coach, I was at the tournament as a coach for the third time, and this is my first time being the manager, managing the national teams. The entire country of Korea are supporting us all the time. The first couple tournament we succeed but the third or fourth tournament, we are not playing well in the result.

So at this sixth annual tournament, we are aiming to do better than previous tournament, so in order to make that happen, we prepare from November 2025 and we have a very good depth roster. Among the 30 players, we are expecting them to play very well and we believe in our roster, all the players.

**Q. You have very solid players. How do you make a game plan? Are you overtaking by hitting or are you trying to minimize the runs?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Currently, at the spring -- previously we had spring training in Okinawa. We played five games. The first game was the result is not something we expected but the last couple games in Okinawa, we played very well, including the players who are playing in the U.S. I think they got use to the condition and the condition is getting better. Their jet lag feeling is gone, I think.

So I think we have a good atmosphere among the teams overall, and I think our players has a great condition. So we believe that these things combined, we are going to have a strong offense.



**Q. When you look at Team Japan, you really have Ohtani or Suzuki, such big lineup. How do you play against them?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Currently I am not focusing on not only game against gentleman Japan. For us, all the four games in the Tokyo round is equally important. The first game against Czech Republic, our game plan is get out and get a win. Get a W. So we are preparing step-by-step.

**Q. Your first opening games against Czech Republic, what's your game plan and how do you evaluate the lineup for the Czech Republic team? Do you have any specific scouting report, and if you can name a starting lineup for tomorrow, can you please share?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, regarding Czech Republic, last November, we played against them, and we felt that that was a great opportunity to make a scouting report, and also, we also made a scout report at the Miyazaki's previous couple games.

What I felt their depth is going to be better. So it's going to be a tough game. For the game plan, pitching is more important, for the limitation of timing, limitation of the pitching count, we have specific rules. So within rules we have to maximize our depth. And our starting pitcher for tomorrow's opening game is So Hyeong-jun.

**Q. Your previous games you tested a couple starters. If you can name the starting rotation pitchers. You just mentioned the first game but if you can mention the others?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Well, yes, I wish I could share all the starters with all of you but unfortunately it won't happen. Wish I could. Let's talk about tomorrow. When we look back at Osaka's previous two games, we had two players who didn't pitch at the Osaka, So Hyeong-jun and Son Ju Young. These are the two who didn't pitch at Osaka. I think safe to say, these two are the probable starters for the first two games.

After the game opener, it all depends on the game



situation, who is going to pitch. And we have one day off among the six games. So I think after one day off, we'll adjust for the rest of the game plan.

**Q. You played at Okinawa, Kim Do Yeong want played against Japan's team game, and batting second spot, at the these were the top of the left-handed pitchers, the previous games. Who is going to lead off for tomorrow's game? Who is going to be batting second, third, the top order, if you can name, please?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, we start preparing from November, thinking about Ahn Hyun Min as second hitter. I think what I evaluate for him is that we are C plus. How he creates runs, he has the most numbers. That's why I put him as second hitter. When we played at previous games in Osaka and Okinawa, yes, we changed the second hitters day-by-day.

And we are still thinking who is going to be the best among, also, he has a great numbers, one -- among 160-some against a right-handed pitcher and lefty as well. He has great numbers. So De Yeong, if he is going to sit at the second spot, I think it's very good lineups.

When we talk -- regarding De Yeong, we had our spring training at say pan and then we ask him to go slowly and step by step because he has an injury last year, and his original ballclub has also asked him to take it easy, slowly.

But now he has a very solid, good condition, and he has no fear of hitting as lead-off hitter. I think he is going to have a great at-bat for tomorrow.

**Q. I was watching yesterday's game, and after we scored, your teammates are doing some playing reaction things, pose. How do you feel about watching Woo, and also jamming hard after he got those -- you showed him the heart mark. What does it mean?**

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, a while ago, I mentioned how serious I played and then when we look back at our players, the airplane action, what they did is something of how they showed to us.

Among all sports in Korea, baseball is No. 1 favorite sport, and the previous couple international tournament, our baseball team, national baseball team is not doing -- succeeded. That makes our entire country disappointed. So this is a time to get recovered and at this tournament, I am respecting us to go for the Miami round at the quarterfinal, now that we are aiming to get the good result for the entire nation.

As a manager, I am very pleased that I am watching my

roster get together bonding as one team, one unit.

Regarding the heart mark jamming, I made a trip to Detroit. I was watching him play. That was a situation for the Tigers, germane were the leadoff guy and when I watched that game, he was -- so energy, and he's always putting out a hundred percent.

In yesterday's game, he has a great concentration, and he did a great stolen base. So I think I had confidence in order to make a big heart mark, I was supposed to do some finger cross, but I think I did a little bit overreaction.

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