

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Japan vs Chinese Taipei

Wednesday, 4 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Japan

Shohei Ohtani

Pregame Press Conference

Q. You just got back from Tokyo. How do you feel about it?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, we have a workout day but finally the tournament is about to start.

Q. How do you feel about your previous five at-bats?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Compared to the 2023 tournament I had less games attempt but I'm glad that I have no injuries, so, so far, so good.

Q. By looking at National Team Japan, the atmosphere is very good. How do you feel about it?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes. Every time I join the younger players are increasing. I feel I'm getting old but by looking at our teammates, we have huge potential, and it's a great team.

Q. How do you evaluate Kitayama's action?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, I had an opportunity talking with various players, and we have some younger players. Sometimes it's difficult for them to communicate with elder players. But day-by-day, I'm trying to communicate with them and the other team, having one powerful performance would be a great way to communicate tomorrow. I feel we had a good communication so far.

Q. In two days, we have Game 1 and a lot of Japanese fans are expecting to you play well. So how do you feel about joining the WBC 2026?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, this is the top of the top tier teams, and whenever we play national teams, all of the fans are getting together, this is how the national games are playing, and so I wish for all the fans waiting for us, cheering. That's all I can say.



Q. When you think about the learning process of playing baseball, one thing most of the players learn is you try, you succeed, you fail. That's how most of the people approach it. So in big tournaments such as the WBC, what is in your mind not to do, your approach not to do?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, most of the players are willing to work hard. So I think as long as your body see in good condition, I think you can do whatever you want to. And it's not a hundred percent condition for most people because it's just beginning of the season. And if you have a day off or if you have a light day work out, it's something that's up to the player.

And this is top tier pros of the pro, very high level players, you need to unite, so by watching them, I am so grateful that our team as great, talented players. That's how I look at my team.

Q. Can you describe a little more for the hitting approach, previous two games, you have five at-bats. What was in your mind to adjust, and as a result of, you didn't have a base hit yet but how did you evaluate for your previous five at-bats?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, as a professional baseball players, and I faced against the MVP pitcher, and the impression it was a bit different than the Major League Baseball pitchers. There's a slight different between the pitchers.

Looking at my previous five at-bats, I had a variety of pitchers against me, and as designed, it's three at-bats for the first game and two at-bats for the second game. That's how we designed. So far, so good.

Q. In two days, your first game is going to start. Do you have confidence to be back-to-back champions in the WBC?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, not only Japan but all the competitors were great teams. There's zero, no easy games, we gave up a run earlier, or there were two or

three run differences. So anything can happen.

So as a team, especially for me at this tournament, I'm only playing on the offensive way, so I'm trying to do my best effort for Team Japan.

Q. After the last WBC, we talked to many players who spoke about how they learned from you and Yu Darvish. What did you learn from the players, and what made you a little better after working with your teammates in 2023?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, well, nothing specifically from me but thanks to Yu Darvish, a lot of coaches were supporting us. There was, again, like I said previously, all I can say is we knew what we can do. Unless someone is asking me what to do, I will be happy to answer but it is not necessary from my side to say something to the players.

Q. Among the Korean players, which player impressed you the most aside from Kim and Lee? Is there another player who stood out to you? And could you explain the reason why?

SHOHEI OHTANI: I am, yes, paying attention to him because is my great teammate, not only as a player but as a human being. We are always having a great time together. So I wish him to play well for the tournament, as well.

Q. In 2015, you visited Taiwan. At the time, you didn't have an opportunity playing against Chinese Taipei at that tournament. The entire Chinese Taipei team is looking forward to playing against you. Team Japan's first game is playing against Chinese Taipei. What is in your mind right now?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, all fans in Taiwan loves baseball and they are treating them very nicely. I have a great experience and I have a good impression.

Yes, for Team Japan, it is going to be first game of the tournament, and my impression for team Chinese Taipei, they have great pitchers. So as a hitter, I'm trying to do my best.

Q. In 2024 at Premier12, when they clinched, when Chinese Taipei clinched, you congratulated us on your social media and that impressed the entire Chinese Taipei people. What do you expect from not only Chinese Taipei team but Chinese Taipei but itself?

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, it is very grateful and I am wishing that the entire Asian baseball is growing up.

And talking about WBC 2026 I am going to be playing, and I am trying to focus on winning with Team Japan.

I am also wishing team Chinese Taipei, well, as well.

Q. Your first game with Team Japan is going to be batting first. We don't know the lineup yet, but how are you preparing for your first at-bat because Team Japan is batting first.

SHOHEI OHTANI: Yes, for the entire Chinese Taipei pitcher, they have a great pitching staff.

So I'm not for sure if I'm go going to be leadoff or the second spot or third spot, but I'm trying to focus on what I can do. If I'm on that lead-off spot, I'm trying to be on base, not only swing hard but also trying to get on the base. That's how I think about it.

Q. The previous the pitcher Kitayama, you designated him; is there any reason why you designated him?

SHOHEI OHTANI: No reasons. Well, he's a very honest -- he's kind of a shy guy. Doesn't talk a lot. I'm trying to make him relax. That's why.

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