

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Japan vs Chinese Taipei

Wednesday, 4 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Japan

Yoshinobu Yamamoto

Pregame Press Conference

Welcome back to Tokyo. How do you feel and what's in your mind right now?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, we just had a practice, workout day at the Tokyo Dome. At the moment, that means getting higher and we have one more day to go. I'm going to try to be in the best condition.

Q. The previous two games you watched, how did you feel about Team Japan's atmosphere?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, we had a great atmosphere. All our rosters are top players. So I have nothing to worry about. All I can say is just that we had a great atmosphere.

Q. Are you going to be the starting pitcher for the tournament Game 1 of the WBC 2026?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, I just see it's going to be our first game, all the tournament. So I'm trying to eliminate our opponent and trying to get a great start of the tournament for Team Japan.

Q. How do you feel about being designated as a starting pitcher for the opening game?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, for whenever we have that first game, it is very difficult to adjust but I'll try to do my best.

Q. A lot of Japanese fans are expecting you to pitch well. How do you feel about it and what do you expect of yourself?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, I had a great condition and I am in a good shape. So I think I can pitch as hard as I can back-to-back two years. Like last year, I'm going to be on the mound for the opening game, so I'm going to show what I can do for the Japanese fans.



Q. For the Japanese society, we had whenever Japan scored, you have been doing some tea ceremony things, and how do you expect yourself playing at the WBC tournament?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, during yesterday's game, at the newest tea ceremony things by watching, I think it's cool. And by watching social media.

That's how I learn what it means, and if we could drink a lot of tea during the game, yes, which means we score a lot, so I am expecting my team to drink a lot of tea, as much as they can.

Q. You dedicated the previous WBC tournament, and the entire Japanese people was touched by watching you pitching. Are you also feeling like you're trying to do your best for Team Japan as well? If you could explain in detail, please.

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Going back-to-back, that is our only goal, and being part of the National Team Japan, I'm trying to do my best.

Q. A year ago you had an opening game at the Dodgers and you also pitched as a starting pitcher with the Orix Buffaloes. Is there a difference between that and being the opening pitcher?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, I'm trying to be the same mentality. To me, every single game is very important, so I'm trying not to change a lot. I'm trying to be the same approach as possible.

Q. There was word over the winter that the Dodgers didn't want you to pitch in the WBC. Was there ever a chance you weren't going to play?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, I had a conversation with the Dodger organization. And it's hard to explain. Well, the entire Japanese people -- the Dodgers understand how big the WBC tournament is big in Japan, and as a player, as a Japanese person, and the Dodgers

and the WBC, they both are very important to me equally.

So yes, I'm trying to do my best and I'm also trying to work out hard, and I had a conversation with the Dodger organization and I decided to pitch at the WBC tournament.

Q. How have you been able to manage your body condition over this extended stretch where you've been pitching a lot of games?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, looking back to my career, I'm trying to focus every day. Day-by-day, every day is important things and this is how I gained. Throughout the seasons, I learned a lot by staying healthy and staying focused every single day. That's how I look at it.

Q. Three years has been passed since we clinch, and within three years, your stage changed to Major League Baseball and you became the world champion and clinched the World Series. Is there any changes looking back to the three years?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, all I can say is we are stepping little by little. That's how I feel. Maybe I am gaining little by little the past three years. Three years is a huge time to change a lot of things, and I have, yes, better confidence than the past three years. When the small things gather, it makes big differences.

Q. In the last three years, you've gained a lot. Is there anything you would change in the last three years? Environmentally we've seen a lot of changes but is there anything you have not changed?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Basically, yes, I haven't changed a lot. I would say I have not changed a lot.

Q. So my question is: What's the key for your daily routine?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Well, being change is something new and something important but trying to be the same is also a great approach. So that's how I look at it. If I go the wrong way, please let me know.

Q. This year, as a teammate, Mr. Haitong will join for the National Team Japan. What does Mr. Haitong bring to the national team and what did you expect from him?

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO: Yes, as a data analyst, it's a huge advantage and he has many ways of talent. When I pitched for the Dodgers, I also make a conversation with him to make a game plan. He also helped with him being

around me, it's a big help for me to pitch for Team Japan.

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