

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Australia vs Czechia

Friday, 6 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Australia

Tim Kennelly

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Dave mentioned that that's going to be a couple hundred kid from Fuchu out here today. You did so many camps there. With a can you tell me about the importance of the camps to these kids and what it means to work with the next generation of ballplayers here at Japan and at home in Australia?

TIM KENNELLY: Yeah, so obviously we've spent a lot of time in Fuchu since I think 2018 or 2019, attending those camps and giving back to the City of Fuchu has been really important for us and our relationship with the Fuchu City.

So to see the kids come here and supporting us, they supported us at all the games we played in Fuchu city, which was amazing to play in front of crowds to start of our camp. And so to give back to those kids is the least we can do, and to watch them and see them here in the ballpark will be pretty cool.

Q. It's no secret or reported that this Czech team has a lot of players who have full-time jobs and then go and play on these amazing international stages, and it's no secret you are a firefighter for some time. How do you think having a full-time job like yourselves and being a firefighter benefit your own baseball career and playing on the field when it comes to the game?

TIM KENNELLY: Yeah, so like myself and a lot of other players on the team, there's a lot of sacrifice that goes into come to compete at the World Baseball Classic. There's a lot of guys from all the other teams, including ourselves, that full-time job is to play baseball. The way I see it is you've got 24 hours in a day, right.

So I don't work 24 hours a day. So I've got plenty of time to go play, practice, train, play in the Australian baseball league but also full-time job as a firefighter, I've been doing that since I finished playing professional baseball for 10 or 11 years, and that's allowed me to sort of be settled and comfortable back home in Australia and allows me to train



and play and put in effort, and things like World Baseball Classic keeps me motivated to keep doing that.

Q. How key was the victory last night and does this feel similar to WBC in 2023?

TIM KENNELLY: Anything like that it's a very similar setting to 2023, we knew the importance of Game 1 for our chances to advance to the quarterfinals was to go out and win against Korea in 2023 and then to win last night against Chinese Taipei.

It sets us up really well and gives the team a load of confidence, as well, leading into our last three games.

Q. How do you feel about your preparation coming into this WBC?

TIM KENNELLY: I feel like our preparation leading into this tournament has been our best preparation yet. Obviously we come off our Australian Baseball League season. So a lot of guys have just played 40 to 50 games which I think having a tournament in March sets us up really good and gives us confidence heading into the World Baseball Classic. Just like yesterday's game, we tackle Czech today and go out and try to win this game before we focus on Games 3 and 4 but the team has got a lot of confidence.

You won't find a playing group or team as close as what we are as a group and the connection we have as a team, and I think that really helps on the world stage.

Q. This is the first time you represent Team Australia in WBC. So compared to those previous teams, in what area do you think the current Australia squad has continued to improve, and if you don't mind, could you share if this time will be your last dance for the WBC?

TIM KENNELLY: I can confirm this will be my last World Baseball Classic. So I'm just trying to soak it all up and enjoy every moment.

But as far as this team goes, I think it just shows the



direction of what where the Australian Baseball League is heading. We continue to cope growing as a sport in our country and we compete with a lot of other sports in a very big sporting country.

You can see with ten rookies coming on to our team that have never played in the World Baseball Classic, let alone any other Team Australia team, the youth mixed with the experience is a good combination.

I think as you saw last night, our pitching's pretty good, and it does really well and it has done really well on the world stage and you have guys that can come up with big hits and I'm sure there are guys that come up with big hits in the next few games. But yeah, the youth coming through shows the distribution of the Australian Baseball League.

Q. Tonight's starting pitcher, Josh Hendrickson, when did you meet him, and can you describe to me what he's like as a person? Leave the baseball out of it.

TIM KENNELLY: Yeah, Josh is from the same city as me in Perth and I've known Josh since he was probably 14 or 15. He's of age and he was just this tall scrawny little pitcher from Perth who went off to college and came back a lot bigger and a lot stronger and a lot better of a pitcher.

Extremely good guy. A pleasure to be around and just a real competitor when he is on the field. But off the field, yeah, just a gentle giant and a really good teammate.

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