

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Japan vs Chinese Taipei

Friday, 6 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Japan

Kensuke Kondo

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Within three hours, your first game is going to be played. What's in your mind?

KENSUKE KONDO: Since the beginning of the Maya sack I workout day, we still have a couple hours to go. So my tension is not as high yet but yes, I would like to be prepared for the beginning.

Q. You played the previous 2023 WBC. Is there any differences?

KENSUKE KONDO: Not really. There is no difference. Last tournament, fortunately, we clinched, so we played this time as defending champion. So some of the fans might feel a different way but as a player, there's no differences.

Q. So how important for you to play for the first game?

KENSUKE KONDO: Yes, the first game is very important and more likely we are aiming to score first. That's what we try to do.

Q. You guys have been playing for three weeks. What is your team's condition right now?

KENSUKE KONDO: Yes, previously, some of the members were the same, remaining as the previous WBC tournament. So we have a great time with some fun. As the previous tournament, we are trying to go for it, and as a result, we would like to be at the top.

Q. You just mentioned a while ago that the tension hasn't changed from the previous tournament. How do you expect for yourself, the new tournament, WBC 2026?

KENSUKE KONDO: Yeah, at Maya sack I spring training squad we have many key offensive players. So as a team, my role, I figure that being on base, that's my role for the



national teams. The past couple years, I played for the Hawks and that is also my role. And what I'm and he canning to myself is hit in a clutch situation for the win.

Q. I assume that you watched last night's contest with Chinese Taipei, and their starting pitcher has just signed with the hawks. Did you have any specific impression of what he pitched last night?

KENSUKE KONDO: Yes, I was watching him throwing a light BP session. That was about a month ago, and his body hasn't been ready yet at the time. But by watching him pitching yesterday, he has a great velocity and I am so pleased that he is my teammate. That's how I felt by watching him last night.

Q. Previously Japan were defeated by Chinese Taipei in the Premier12. Is there any approach to play against Chinese Taipei?

KENSUKE KONDO: Yes, I was also watching the final of the Premier12, and lately all Chinese Taipei's pitchers pitched in Japan. Their level is raising up higher. On the other hand in an offensive way they have great power hitters but recently their defense and the skills and abilities potential of the pitcher is also raising up. So tonight's contest is going to be a tough one.

Q. In the contest when Chinese Taipei played, although it was not a Japan-involved game, we have over 40,000. When you play them in the WBC, what's the key point to play well?

KENSUKE KONDO: Yes, the atmosphere of last night's contest, not only by watching the game but from the Holt, when we get on the bus from the way to the Holt to the Dome and also when we had a training squad at Osaka and Miyasaki, we had huge fans as well behind us.

Watching last night's game, it was a big surprise, and since we are the defending champion, I am everybody is trying to aim to beat us. But as Skipper Iбата mentioned to us, we are the one not to be defending champion but try to be aggressive.



Q. Starting from today, you're going to have three consecutive games and especially for the weekend games, a lot of kid are pretty much watching Team Japan playing. So what's your expectation for the future for the kids?

KENSUKE KONDO: It's an international matches with high level, and we are very solid. We are expecting a very, very high level of games. So for the kids, if they are interested in start playing baseball, and what we can do and what I am aiming is I want them to start playing. That's my aim.