

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Chinese Taipei vs Czechia

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Czechia

Martin Cervenka

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Can you talk about your relationship with Max Prejda?

MARTIN CERVENKA: Good morning, thank you for the question.

With Max when we stay together, I just kind of -- you know, he's a really talented guy for us, 18 at this stage, being able to compete and has had some really good at-bats so far and hopefully will keep going. When we talk in the hotel rooms, it's like if he has any questions about the game, my experience, what I see he's doing with his swing and stuff like that, I always try to help him.

But ultimately, I just tell him, hey, go out there, have fun, do what you do best. Everyone knows you're talented and good enough to be here. Just prove it to yourself and prove it to everybody. That's it.

Q. What did you learn when you played in the U.S., and where will you play after WBC?

MARTIN CERVENKA: For the first question, I did play in the U.S. for quite a long time in the minor leagues and got to some decent level. At one point that ended. I'm still looking to go back or play in Japan, of course. I love the game of baseball and I enjoy it every single day, so I will be open to anything. But now with my family, it will be a little bit tougher as well because there's more discussions.

As to what I learned in the U.S., there's a lot of things, a lot of things. But what I always say to everybody is I just try to enjoy the game every single day because sports live in general, athletes' lives in general is always shorter than regular people's lives. Just enjoy it. One day it's going to end for everybody and no regrets when you're done.

Q. So your nickname with the team is "Barry" for Barry Bonds, the American home run leader but I heard you just met Sadaharu Oh, the worldwide leader.



What did it mean to meet him here inside the Tokyo Dome?

MARTIN CERVENKA: Yeah, I mean, it's special. It's like any time you get to meet great, great players all over the world, obviously like everybody follows Major League Baseball but Sadaharu Oh means a lot to Japanese people and worldwide.

Meeting a legend like this, it's a special moment in Tokyo. It's kind of unreal what you're able to get to with baseball. I really do appreciate it. I shook his hand. It's a really nice feeling.

Q. What is your feeling about the atmosphere in the Tokyo Dome?

MARTIN CERVENKA: It's an amazing feeling because we always play this game, or I believe we play this game for the people, for the fans to enjoy. And more people get to watch us, it's special for the players and special for the people as well, for everybody in the WBC tournament. Doesn't matter if it's Tokyo Dome or Taipei Dome. I personally always enjoy it. It's always a little bit more free spirit.

Q. What is the biggest difference since last WBC?

MARTIN CERVENKA: The biggest difference is the 20,000 people. Yeah, of course the stadium is nice here and everything, and the treatment we get as players when we go to these domes it's unbelievable, and we really do appreciate it like I mentioned, biggest difference are the fans, the people, but we enjoy it. That's why we play the game so we have people come watch us.

And then, ultimately, we as a team, we try to treat it as every single day. It's the same for us. We tried to treat it as any other baseball game. We qualified to this level for some reason, so we believe we can compete here and that's our goal, compete every single pitch and just leave everything on the field and whatever the outcome is, it is what it is.



But we know inside of us that we put everything out on the field.

Q. So obviously this is a huge tournament, global game, but you guys also just won Bronze in the European championship and you had a remarkable game. What is both the importance of playing here but also these European tournaments and showing yourselves as a European power and where the level of baseball in Europe is?

MARTIN CERVENKA: So, yeah, we'll have to split it because WBC is worldwide so it is a lot wider reach, and this way, we can get more people to follow our team or notice Czech baseball and Czech players and that we have do have some talent on our team.

But talking about Europe and the European championship, it was a long-term goal of Czech baseball. We have been trying to get the medal for over 20 years and we were finally able to get one. It was very special for us.

Within the European level and within the Czech Baseball Association, it was really important for us to see that even in Europe, like we are moving towards the right thing and we are doing the right things. We can keep going and keep going in this direction to try to get to the ultimate goal, which is the European gold. We still have some ways to go but the Bronze Medal was a good start for now and hopefully we can keep growing the game in Czech and get more kids involved.

Q. Can you talk about how you met Sadaharu Oh?

MARTIN CERVENKA: I just met him about five, ten minutes ago out on the field. So it was really nice. Me and a couple of our guys from our team were part of the world baseball at children's fair. I personally went in 2003. So it's about 13 years ago, I believe, or maybe even more. It's a long time ago.

But I mean, we didn't really talk but we shook his hand and just being able to meet a legend like this, it's a special feeling.

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