

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Korea vs Japan

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Korea

Ji-Hyun Ryu

Pregame Press Conference

Q. As a player, you involved from the first annual, WBBC and since then you play and managed for a long period of time and you guys have great experience and history to battle against Team Japan. What's in your mind right now?

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, every time I had an interview I'm trying to repeat the same things. Whenever we have a game, play against Team Japan, it's very important. But equally what I feel is other games against Chinese Taipei and the Czech and Australia are equal, same as Team Japan.

And today, (letters) I thought this is a very important slogan for Team Japan, meaning trying to organize the group and try to be leadership.

So (letters), that's something I -- it's in my mind right now. Try to be the manager with a strong leadership.

Q. A lot of people is paying attention to who is going to be starting pitcher for tonight. You just mention that Ko Young Pyo is starting pitcher for tonight. If you can tell me why.

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, at spring training squad, some of you may know what was happen at spring training, our spring squad. We had Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, Plan D. We are prepared as much as we could have and when we had spring training in Okinawa, I think that was the very last period of spring training in Okinawa.

That was a time to rethink what's the best plan. At that time we had a minor change. Then Ko Young Pyo, that was the time we decide he was probably the most better option to put him on as starter for tonight.

Q. Opponents's starting pitcher is Yusei Kikuchi, lefty from Team Japan. I think early in innings it's very important. So if you could share your offense lineup



starting lineup. Can you share me, please?

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes. Before mentioning our starting lineup, regarding Yusei Kikuchi, we covered and he dominated either the righty and the lefty. But more detail when we looked at it when he faced righty for the 43 percent and against lefty the 35 percent, and his pitch is a slider, so I think he has advantage for the righty.

For tonight, we not going to change from one to four. As far as I understand Kim Hyeseong, he just had pre-game interview and Hyeseong, I'm expecting him to -- if he could be on the base, that's huge advantage for us.

So we are going put the same number from number one to number four we raise up Kim Hyeseong on the top and I'm expecting them to be on base to score.

Q. Last night Japan beat Chinese Taipei. I think the key moment was Shohei as at-bat. If you have any game plan when you faced against Shohei Ohtani particularly?

JI-HYUN RYU: Yes, we watched the entire game last night. Team Japan, until Team Japan played squad game in Osaka, I think they might have offensive struggle a bit. But yesterday, by watching them playing yesterday, I think all of the -- most the hitters looks pretty good, not only Shohei.

But I'm not going to name any, but from the top to the bottom they have a great lineup. So until last minute, we been doing some advanced scouting report, and be prepared well and we just play hard.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

