

World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Korea vs Australia

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Australia

David Nilsson

Pregame Press Conference

Q. My question is about the starting pitcher, Connor MacDonald. First part is, how long have you known Connor? What's he like off the field, and why did you choose him for this moment?

DAVID NILSSON: I think Connor was born in 1996. I was on a team with his father. It was either '96 or '97. I've known him since he was born. I've spent a lot of time with his parents.

With the way he's been throwing the ball and the way our pitching has been set up, it all lined up really well for him to start today. I think it puts us in a really good position, so really comfortable choosing him for today.

Q. (Question in Japanese).

DAVID NILSSON: Yeah, I'll be very fortunate to come up against this team for quite some time as a player and as a manager. I think quite clearly they're getting stronger. They're becoming more athletic.

They've always been very good fundamentally. They've always pitched very well and good defense, but you're starting to see -- well, you do see right now really powerful hitters obviously, and that's the biggest change. The body size is changing over the last 20 years.

Q. (Question in Japanese).

DAVID NILSSON: Yeah, he's swinging the bat well, but really I'm not spending too much time on one player. I mean, there's nine guys in the lineup. They're all very powerful. They're all very good hitters. We don't know where the game is going to take us, so I don't spend any more time on Shohei than I do other players.

Q. (Question in Japanese).

DAVID NILSSON: Well, first of all, we don't have a key



person. We play as a team. Everything we do is as a team, so the guys have been swinging the bats really well, and our pitching has been great so far. That's all we can control. Throw strikes, and we've played good defense.

Obviously as this tournament goes on, we're going to face different teams with a lot of talent, and we'll just keep focusing on ourselves, not the opposition. We'll focus on executing pitches, playing good defense, and taking good swings.

Q. (Question in Japanese).

DAVID NILSSON: The growth of Australian baseball is going to continue to happen as we have players getting to the Major Leagues, and that's always going to happen. It's a country with great athletes. We take pride in that.

I think as more people in Australia play the game of baseball, you're going to see more guys in the Big Leagues. I think that's just going to evolve over time. That's why we play as a good team, because we have good athletes and really committed to each other.

Q. (Question in Japanese).

DAVID NILSSON: Yeah, very excited. Very big stage. You know, an opportunity to play against the best team in the world in the Tokyo Dome, that's an exciting time for anyone. Coming through Fuchu, as we mentioned several times, it's a great little city, and we have a wonderful relationship there, and they really support us and help us prepare for this.

So, yeah, tonight is a big night. We've been waiting for it, but it's just one night in the event. Hopefully we play well. I'm sure we will, and we're really excited for tonight's game.

Q. Yeah, I think we knew a few days ago we'd heard it. It wasn't confirmed, but we had heard that. After the game last night it was confirmed, so we've been prepared for this.

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