

# World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Australia vs Japan

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

## Team Japan

## Tomoyuki Sugano

### Postgame Press Conference

Japan 4, Australia 3

THE MODERATOR: Now let's start the press conference for Team Japan.

**Q. First of all, congratulations on a big win. Looking back to today's game, what's in your mind right now?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Well, I pitched as I planned with the catchers and scouting report, and I think I am so pleased that I pitched and lead the team to the win.

**Q. So what's in your mind when you went to the mound?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: This was an undefeated game, and I'm expecting that Australian team is swinging hard, so mainly I'm trying to focus especially the first inning zero.

**Q. Looking back to today's game, your next pitch opportunity is after the quarterfinal when the Team Japan arrive in Miami. What are you expecting for the next outing?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: I don't know yet which game is going to be my next one. No matter when I pitch next, I'm trying to adjust as much as I can. Wherever the team is asking me, I'll do all-out for my team.

**Q. Let me ask the pregame huddle, did you hear the content, what they talked about?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Well, yeah, Kazuma Okamoto talked about me. Yes, as a matter of fact -- well, when I met him with Kazuma Okamoto at the bathroom, and then he was asking, hey, Mr. Sugano, are you nervous. So I respond to Kazuma, Yeah, I feel a bit pressure on it. So, you know, that thing, it happened before the game start.

**Q. Then regarding Okamoto, he is playing very good**



**defense behind you. How do you feel about him as a teammate, former teammate and current teammate as Team Japan.**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Yes, he's a great -- well, I haven't played with -- I haven't pitched behind Kazuma for a while, but most of the people would expect Kazuma is not defense, but all of them, most of them, including me, is expecting Kazuma to hit better, swing hard, hit better.

**Q. Talking about Japan's offense, we went through zero through six innings. By watching Yoshida's go ahead two-run shot from dugout, how did you feel?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Well, at the moment I wasn't at the dugout. Not only today's game, but like yesterday's we were behind, and all our teammates are very positive no matter what the situation is. So I'm always thinking this team is not going to beat. So this kind of clubhouse atmosphere is something we are proud of. I am so much proud of our offense.

**Q. And this is the first Emperor attending game, first time in 60 years. As a starting pitcher, did you feel any special emotion or any thought regarding to this game?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Yes, I had a special thought. So that's why maybe I put a little extra pressure on it on myself, but atmosphere and the air inside the dome -- well, the Tokyo Dome has been my home. This was probably something I cannot express, but we are usual atmosphere.

That's how I felt before the pitch. I'm trying to focus to pitch hard and show the Royal Family the great game.

**Q. You pitched in your former home stadium, Tokyo Dome, with national team uniform, and you pitched four innings, scoreless innings. How did you look back today's game?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Yes, once I went to the mound, all I focus and all I care is pitch by pitch, hitters by hitters to get zero. Since Mr. Iбата told me, You're going to start

against the Australian, I start felt I am going to be back to my former mound at Tokyo Dome. It makes me happy, and until today I had a great time spending to prepare for my outcome.

**Q. Previously you just mentioned that the atmosphere is great. They have no fear. Looking back to the Spring Training, you joined during the middle of the Spring Training in Miyazaki. Did you feel the special atmosphere from the beginning from day one of the Miyazaki training where you joined?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Well, we had Shohei Ohtani, and we have many Major Leaguers. Not only them, not only these big names, but all 30 players have their own role. They know what we should do for the team.

When I joined Spring Training during Miyazaki, we don't have play actual game yet. It was just working out process, but throughout the exhibition games when we play after the first game, second game, third game, I felt very confident game by game.

Then for day after tomorrow we have another game left, so I think I have a very good confidence with my bonding unite one team and show them our strongness and then fly to Miami with pride.

**Q. Regarding the pitchers in Japan, when (indiscernible) joined, I think you were kind of became a mentor for the Team Japan's pitchers. Now we are 3-0, and you guys advanced to clinch the berth. How do you describe the strength of the Team Japan's pitching staff?**

TOMOYUKI SUGANO: Yes, like I said previously, all the pitchers, all the players have their own role. If you play for your individual teams, you have a starter, or you are the setup guy or you're the closer, but hear in the national team under we have a different role. I'm not saying too much sacrifice, but we sacrifice feeling, our pitchers, all of our pitchers marching forward. That's a key fact. We won't lose this 3-0 result. I think sacrifice is something I'm so proud of.

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