

# World Baseball Classic: Pool C - Czechia vs Japan

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

## Team Japan

### Hiroto Takahashi

#### Postgame Press Conference

Japan 9, Czech Republic 0

#### Q. Do you feel about your outing tonight?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, as a starter, I had a great progression with my velocity. Plus my strong, money pitch split. That's how we made a plan before the game with Mr. Shoe hey.

#### Q. Looking at your outing tonight, your high fastballs were very effective. Was it part of your game plan?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, it was. Because we knew that there's a slight differences between the NPB umpires and the strike zone of the umpire -- the differences in the strike zone from NPB and MLB umpires, so, yeah, that's something we tried.

#### Q. It's been for the first outing in three years, pitching in WBC tournament. How was it?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, and when I faced against the Czech lineup, I felt they have a strong speed and a strong power, so I'm trying not to give up any base hit. During my pitching, I felt a special feeling that I pitch in the WBC tournament, such an international tournament.

#### Q. Now Team Japan is flying to Miami for the quarterfinal, semifinal and final and the environment will change. What's in your mind?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, from now, we are going to have a chance to go on in the tournament, so I am going to be prepared for the next outing and if I have a chance to go on the mound, I will try to do my best.

#### Q. You've been saying that going to the mound as a starting pitcher of the national team is going to be dream and the dream came true tonight.



HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes. Being a starting pitcher at WBC was one of my goals. So how do I explain? I am so grateful and at the same time I am responsible for that.

#### Q. Looking back at tonight's outing, I think you'll have another outing at the knock-down tournament when you go into Miami. Do you think what's your role for the Miami round? Are you going to be a starter or set up or closer?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, like I previously said this will be a do-or-die situation, big game. My role might be set up or other position. So from the quarterfinal, I'd like to have perfect preparation and whenever I have an opportunity, do my best.

#### Q. Previous three years, you mentioned to us that your still has been improved with location and looking back at your previous three years, what was the things that you think you gain a lot?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Tonight's contest, whenever I pitch, I was always watching all the hitters, what he is sitting on or where is his weak point. These are the things I did tonight and I could have done before, so that's something I gained.

#### Q. By watching opponent hitters closely, is there something that you have an extra confidence on it or how did you start doing this because most of the pitchers cannot do.

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, I think both the technique and my confidence, I felt the past three years, I felt a lot of different way of growing up myself.

#### Q. As a result, you pitched four and two-thirds. Was it planned or were you taking it out by out and hitter by hitter? What was Team Japan's starting pitcher's game plan?

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, what I felt is I go one by one, and I thought that's why I went through four and two-thirds innings.



**Q. My previous WBC 2023 you pitched in the Miami round as well. You've been through a lot of experience. So going forward in the next Miami outing, what is your expectation?**

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, the environment and the ballpark facility surface, a lot of things changed from the Tokyo Dome. But I had a strong point. My strong point was I hadn't experienced pitching in Miami. So I have a feel I am ready for the next outing.

**Q. Flying to Miami first, and you just mentioned that you might be starter or you might be setup, but the stage, the environment is changing and it's going to be a knock-out round. How exciting that to you?**

HIROTO TAKAHASHI: Yes, playing baseball in the U.S., and we will play against one of the top-tier world opponents, and this environment throughout that experience, I think I can get more experience, more confident, and we do have a strong will to get a win and get out from them.

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