

World Baseball Classic: Pool D

Thursday, 5 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Israel

Manager Brad Ausmus

Workout Day Press Conference



Q. Have the players named a captain at all?

BRAD AUSMUS: No, we have not done that.

Q. The Stubbs brothers specifically, I saw in the exhibition game that you were able to swap them, catcher DH, catcher DH. Is that going to be allowed during the tournament or is that only an exhibition thing?

BRAD AUSMUS: No, that was an exhibition thing where we could get both of them behind the plate and also still get them a full game worth of at-bats. And I discussed it with the opposing manager and the umpires before the game to make sure it was okay. But that will not be allowed.

Q. How do you see the utilization of those two? Are they going to split the time? Is it going to be one towards the other?

BRAD AUSMUS: No. I don't know that it's going to be one or the other. We're going to kind of go game to game. Right now, I expect Garrett to catch the first game, but we haven't really set the lineup yet. We're still waiting on Venezuela's starting pitcher.

Q. In terms of starters, do you guys have the rotation set in stone yet or are able to share yet?

BRAD AUSMUS: We're going to actually start Ben Simon tomorrow. He's probably more of an opener than he is a bulk pitcher. Then Game 2 will be Dean, Dean Kremer. But that's as far as we've gotten.

Q. We always have this notion that sports can be unifying and the crowds here in the past for this event have been ridiculously energetic and the place is jammed and it's unlike what we see a lot of the year here for baseball. Are you hoping that this tournament reminds people of that? These are obviously interesting times globally; we all know that. What are

you hoping this does from the non-on the field side?

BRAD AUSMUS: I mean, I think you kind of spoke to what I believe, and that is, especially in this country, baseball has often brought kind of joy to people in difficult times. I think of like 9/11 when baseball shut down. I was playing at the time. Baseball shut down for a week and then came back, and it was a unifying source for the country.

In that vein, I kind of hope that happens here. I was here in 2023. The crowds were just as you described, very energetic, was a playoff atmosphere. So I hope it does the same.

Yeah, to put it mildly, it's interesting times right now. So I hope there is that kind of unifying joy that all these players, coaches, they're representing their heritage, but they all have one thing in common, and that's baseball. I hope the fans enjoy it.

Q. Dean Kremer, a guy that's going to be a front-line guy for you, but what more does he bring to this team as someone who's very experienced at the WBC level?

BRAD AUSMUS: He and Garrett, Spencer, they all did it the last two times. This might be Dean's third time. Experience helps because as we were just talking about, it is a playoff atmosphere. There's a lot of energy. We have young guys who have not done it before. Controlling the emotions, controlling the adrenaline is a big part.

And I think when you see guys in the moment like a catcher in Garrett or Dean on the mound calmly approaching his craft, I think that can be contagious, and it can help the team play with a calmness but a focus.

They are; they're kind of the veteran WBC players.

Q. What were some of your takeaways from the last few days of exhibitions?

BRAD AUSMUS: The biggest takeaway is getting eyes on the players. Some of these players I have never seen before. As a matter of fact, a big chunk of them. I've seen



Dean Kremer because I'm with the Yankees and I've seen Dean pitch against us quite a bit, so Dean is a known commodity.

But guys like Cole Carrigg, I've never seen or Zach Levenson. And some of them very impressive. Cole Carrigg looks like he's a very athletic -- almost like he has lightning in his body. It's good to see these guys, get eyes on them, kind of get an idea of what their physical capabilities are. Even though it's a short four-day tournament, any information that you can glean in a couple exhibition games is helpful.

Q. You said it's a sprint, not a marathon. How has the team come together the last couple days knowing it's going to be a short time?

BRAD AUSMUS: It is a sprint, and part of the challenge is building the camaraderie with 30 guys, including taxi squad -- 30 guys getting to know each other. Some do know each other from the Minor Leagues or the Major Leagues, but building the camaraderie is one of the biggest challenges.

And just from a baseball perspective, it's a sprint. You're playing each team one time. It's not like the regular season where it's 162 games and you go into a city or they come to you for three or four games. You've got to go after the other team, and anything can happen in one game. Maybe not best of seven, but anything can happen in one game and that's kind of the approach we have to take.

Q. I'd like to hear you talk about Nate Fish, a member of your coaching staff. What does he bring to this group and these players with all his international experience, as well?

BRAD AUSMUS: I've known Nate for almost 15 years now. The best way to describe Nate is he's a character. I mean that in a positive way. He's really a character. He's entertaining. He makes people laugh. But he loves the game of baseball. He's been involved with baseball in the United States and Israel for decades now.

He's actually really just fun to have around. He's kind of a source of levity.

Q. When you look at the lineup the Dominican is throwing out there, it's like an All-Star Game. How much of a challenge is it to try to navigate playing against that lineup?

BRAD AUSMUS: I mean, there's no question it's an outstanding team. If you were looking at the rosters, the Dominicans, the U.S., Japan, they're going to be very

good, and it's going to be an extreme challenge.

But we don't have to win eight out of ten games. We have to win one game. And if you have a couple guys who have good games, a couple pitchers have good games, you come up with a big hit, you have a chance because it's baseball.

Baseball is dissimilar from other sports in the sense that it seems like the favorite in other sports, it's much easier for them to win. But that being said, it's going to be a challenge. But we're not rolling over.

Q. You mentioned you haven't seen a lot of your own players before this week. How challenging is that as a manager, to have to go out there and deal with a bullpen and deal with your lineup and not really having more than a few days of experience of having seen them?

BRAD AUSMUS: That is also a challenge, there's no question. I think as you know, in baseball, we have a ton of data to back up some of the -- as background for some of these players.

But the other teams have the same challenge, so I feel like that's a fair playing field.

Q. You alluded to it earlier when you said you represent your heritage. The idea of this tournament when it was first born was there was probably a healthy amount of skepticism for obvious reasons. It's March. Guys are starting a marathon, not ending it and all that. You hear more about guys who are upset that they got left off than guys who got asked to do it.

Why does this matter? I get representing the country, representing the heritage, representing your family; I get all that. Guys want to play in this it seems like. Why is that?

BRAD AUSMUS: I think the crux of this is they want to represent their heritage. For me, the '23 WBC was a big turning point in terms of viewership, energy. I think MLB, the WBC, they've learned things over the years, and the tournament has become better and better. It's gotten a lot more attention.

Truthfully, because it's gotten a lot more attention, players want to be part of it.

Keep in mind, also, a lot of these players now, they watch the WBCs when they were growing up and now they're in the professional ranks. When they were a kid they're like, wow, that would be cool to represent my country. Now they have the opportunity.



I think that's part of the season some people who weren't selected are maybe like, oh, this stinks, I want to play for the USA or I want to play for the Dominican or I want to play for Israel, whatever it is.

But it's grown. Is the timing perfect? No, but when you play 162 games, I don't know that there is a perfect time. You want guys to be prepared to avoid injury. You want them to be prepared because you want it to be entertaining. But I don't know what the perfect time is. This is the time we have it, so it's go time.

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