

World Baseball Classic: Pool D

Thursday, 5 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Israel

Harrison Bader

Spencer Horwitz

Workout Press Conference



Q. Harrison, the last Classic you couldn't play because of injury. What are you expecting from this classic, and do you feel the importance for the new season with the Giants?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, I'm very excited to be here. Like you mentioned, last Classic I couldn't play, couldn't perform, couldn't get ready. Obviously we're healthy now, and I'm very happy to be here representing Team Israel. It's something that I've always wanted to do. It's a long time coming, so I'm excited to go out there and give a lot of good energy, play hard, and see how it all shakes out.

Then the second part of your question with regards to the Giants, I'm very excited. It's a great organization. It's very reminiscent of some of the organizations I've been a part of in the past. I think they do a good job of blending history, structure, expectations and also personnel, which are all fantastic ingredients for a really successful team and season.

I'm excited to be on the West Coast, and yeah, it's going to be awesome. I can't wait to get on the field there. It's a great place to play.

Q. Spencer, you participated in the last WBC. Now you've spent time in Toronto and Pittsburgh. How much is that experience going to help you coming into this Classic, just keep all the emotions at bay and focus on the game? Also, how much is your experience going to help other players that haven't been in the World Baseball Classic before?

SPENCER HORWITZ: Yeah, for me looking back on the '23 Classic, I hadn't played in the Big Leagues yet. It was my first time playing in a big league stadium, playing a new position. I'm really proud of that guy for getting out there and helping the team win.

But now three years later, I'm just super excited to help

these young guys. And we've got some really good players like Harrison here. I think this team can do something special and come together. And I think that my favorite part was the brotherhood that was created in '23 and being able to see these guys in the locker room. Everyone is super excited to get back out there.

Q. Harrison, these are obviously interesting times globally, and you guys are here to play a game, play a tournament. What is kind of the dual meaning right now? What can these games do to remind people what sports are all about, but how much more does it mean in this world today to wear that across your chest?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, listen, it means a lot. It means a lot to people who represent the country and the culture and everything, the same way that we do. We're baseball players; we're tasked with going out there and playing baseball. That's really all there is to it. Just staying focused on that singular task of going out there and trying to win a baseball game, I think allows you to quiet some of the noise, like you mentioned.

At the end of the day, we're baseball players. I'm a baseball player. I'm extremely excited to come out here and represent my culture, my loved ones, and my people.

Listen, I'm happy to be here. I missed the last one, so it means a lot to them in my career. I've always wanted to be a part of this. It's special. I'm thrilled to be here, I'm excited. And for all of the young kids out there that in many ways look up to athletes and baseball players, I just hope I can be a fantastic example and representation of something much larger than any individual person or baseball player.

It means a lot. A lot of people watching. A lot of people I know that are watching. I'm excited to go out there and put on a show for them.

Q. I wanted to get both of your perspectives on this, just being around this coaching staff in particular, what has that been like across the first couple days of



exhibitions?

SPENCER HORWITZ: Yeah, I knew Brad and Youk before. They were awesome last time. They have unbelievable experience, unbelievable wisdom. I was just picking their brains in the locker room while we were eating breakfast. They have tremendous wisdom, tremendous experience, and they've done it at the highest level for a really long time. Hopefully I can just be a sponge and soak it up from them.

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, what Spencer said. You never know in baseball where you're going to pick up something. Even if it's one thing over an entire season, I think it's successful.

Being around past players with a lot of experience, I've picked up nuggets of information on teams and players that I've been across the league with. And now I get to kind of do it in this uniform, which I think is great, because in baseball you're never done learning. You're never done practicing. You're never done trying to be the best version of yourself, whether it's year one or at the end of your career.

Always being open to wisdom like Spencer mentioned, always being open to those conversations that revolve around the game that we love in whatever uniform, I think is special.

I'm excited. I just got here, but I'm certainly going to soak up every ounce of knowledge that they have.

Listen, I think there's also some players that I can learn from that aren't necessarily in the Major Leagues that remind you of how special it is to simply suit up and go out there and represent a team. That's what this is all about. This stage, everything we're playing for is so much bigger than any individual, and we have to realize that and understand it. It is very special.

I think just taking information from everybody, soaking it all up and then going out there and putting your best foot forward, I think it's just great. I'm really happy to be a part of it.

Q. Spencer, as a returner, what has been your message to those doing this for the first time?

SPENCER HORWITZ: Enjoy it. I learned so much last time. And, yeah, there's going to be some moments of doubt, some moments of fear. But just fully embrace it and know that you're going to learn a lot from it, and it's going to help you a lot in the long run of your career.

And really lean into each other. That's what helped me the most last time I was here when we were playing in front of 40,000 Dominican fans and 200 Israeli fans. It's a really eye-opening experience, and it's a really unique situation to play in this tournament, and it will really, really help you in your career.

Q. You get to do this with Colby Halter, a fellow former Gator. What's it like to be able to do that with him?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, baseball is a very small world. As you go through the ranks and everything, you always run into people you played with or had some level of affiliation with in the past.

I know there's some Canes in there as well. It's actually funny. One of the comments was Oh, I'm a Cane, don't hate me. I'm like, No, we loved you guys. We really enjoyed beating the crap out of you guys when I was at UF, so what's not to love.

I'm just kidding. I think it's great, honestly. We all have a journey in this game. For me, college was such a good three years because at that time, not only as a growing kid but also as a baseball player, I needed structure tremendously. I needed structure on and off the field, and UF provided me with that structure.

It just gave me so many valuable life lessons that I was able to apply to baseball that I think helped me progress throughout my career. Because it's never easy. There are always going to be obstacles, if you will.

I think running into old college players that I may have played against or have some level of connection with is great. It just reminds you where you came from, and it's important to always remember that when you take the field in the present day.

Q. For both of you guys, you both have teammates playing in this pool. Has there been any good-natured trash talking during Spring Training leading up to this? And Spencer specifically, what's it going to be like being across the field from Vlad?

SPENCER HORWITZ: Yeah, I did some live at-bats against Dennis Santana about a week ago. He got me the first one and I got him the second one. And there was some friendly banter in the locker room after, and I'm excited to go out there and compete. That's what I love to do. I love going out there and competing. When it's a teammate and a friend, it makes it a little more special.

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, seeing guys across the league in different uniforms is a cool experience. Again, when

we're in the Major Leagues, we wear our organization's uniform, obviously, but here we get to see where people are from, and you're reminded of their culture. You're reminded of their childhood and how far they came, especially from other countries, to ultimately get to the major league level.

I think seeing guys in their true home uniforms is just a very cool experience. And like Spencer mentioned, you have to embrace it and remind yourself where you came from. That's what propels us forward, obviously. Being from New York, I think about it all the time. I take that on the field with me.

These guys, especially Spanish guys and everything, I grew up around Spanish baseball in New York City. Cubans, Venezuelans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, they come alive differently. They're brought back to a childhood version of themselves where there was no money, there was nothing besides playing baseball that day.

I think with all the success that players have had throughout their careers, they get to go back and really remind and feel what it was like before all of the fame and money and whatnot. It's great. It brings you back to a childhood state, and yeah, it's awesome. I love seeing guys represent their countries and their cultures across the diamond during the classic.

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