

World Baseball Classic: Pool D

Thursday, 5 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Nicaragua

Manager Dusty Baker

Workout Day Press Conference



Q. Dusty, at 76, how much fun is this for you to do this, just be part of this thing and know what's coming here?

DUSTY BAKER: Yeah, it's great. Everybody mentions age all the time. They told me I was 74 in Houston and too old, but we won. So I was trying to copy Jack McKeon who beat me when I was in Chicago and they said Jack was too old. When you're around young people, it keeps you young.

I've got a son 27, a couple grandsons. I like being around young people, and I love being in this uniform and playing a game.

Q. What about the rotation at this point? You have the training in Nicaragua and two games here in Florida. Do you think the rotation is set for the World Baseball Classic with Nicaragua?

DUSTY BAKER: Yeah, we'll set the first couple games and we'll see how it goes and we'll see who we use. Because you've got to take it one game at a time, and then you worry about tomorrow tomorrow. But whatever it takes to win today, that's what we'll do.

Everybody has a plan, but sometimes the opposition changes your plans.

Q. To have four local guys play on this team, how special is that, and what has it been like working with Freddy Zamora, giving him tips?

DUSTY BAKER: I mean, it's great. You kind of wish that you might have been in that situation to play in front of your hometown people, play in front of your friends and relatives.

I think it's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. They'll probably be here a number of other World Baseball Classics. I met Zamora's dad the other day, who I thought was his brother because he looks so young. That means

Zamora comes from good genes. He's a very good player.

I've talked to a number of people -- I didn't know him, but I had heard of him. It's great to put eyes on him. He's a very good, smooth player that came from baseball lineage.

Q. I want to hear your perspective because Nicaragua was one of the teams who started so early to come, the preparation for that moment. How would you describe that team in the other Classic?

DUSTY BAKER: See, I wasn't involved in the other Classic, but I was in Spring Training in West Palm Beach and I had a couple players on my team, three or four players on my team that were in the Classic, mostly from Puerto Rico and Venezuela. It seems very, very exciting.

I was invited to be the manager of the USA team in the last Classic, but I couldn't -- I refused because I was trying to get my team to the World Series and win back to back for the first time since the Yankees. It didn't happen.

But I think from watching on TV and from playing winter ball in Puerto Rico, México, and Venezuela, there's nothing like a stand full of Latin Americans that are partying and having a great time.

Q. What do you think about the player Mark Vientos?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, he's a really good player, good young player, who I've seen from afar. His future is very bright. He's one of the guys that the Mets are counting on to be big man in the middle of the order.

I talked to Mendoza, his manager, who played for me when he was a kid years ago. He really likes him, and he really is counting on him to be a big part of the team.

Q. First base is a position that you have many options to put together. Do you think Emanuel Trujillo is in the lineup against Dominican Republic after he's done all this training in the games in Florida?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, he was in the lineup anyway, no



matter what he did yesterday. It could change within a couple of days, but I like what I see. I like the fact that he's -- I like his power. I like his attitude. He can run for a big man. He's actually, like, my third catcher in case something happens to anybody on the field.

I'm glad he hit the home run yesterday to take a little pressure off of him before we start.

Q. Dusty, you were recently quoted as saying that this is a David versus Goliath situation and that your team was not going to be a pushover. How do you convince that to this team coming in? You can say that to the media, but how do you convince them of that?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, number one, our team is full of believers that believe in Christ, in Cristo. They prayed before I got here every day before the game, so they are very familiar with the David and Goliath story. It's not like I was speaking to guys that didn't understand.

I haven't said that to them but once or twice, and now it's time to play. You just have to play with the power of belief and a power that you can dig deep down inside to get what you want if you really believe. We know we're playing a great team, a powerhouse team. But I've been on powerhouse teams and lost, too.

In a one-game series, anything can happen.

Q. Jeter Downs, he has now two years' experience in Japan. What do you expect him to bring to Nicaragua?

DUSTY BAKER: Jeter Downs? Well, I don't know much about him, but he was in Washington with my son, and my son really likes him. He's like one of my son's best friends, and he said, Dad, he can play.

Some of the guys that have joined us late are a little behind because they've only played like three or four games, and that's not really enough to get your timing as if you're going to be in April or May. But the thing about it is we do have some guys that played in the winter league that are probably a month or so removed from playing ball. So I'm hoping that we can put them on a crash course and try to use them in a situation where I think it is really going to help us.

Q. I would like to know what are your plans after this week? We know you have enjoyed this trip, this whole tournament, but what do you expect to do after this, and if you have some plans with Nicaragua after this weekend.

DUSTY BAKER: Well, after this, I don't know. I've got an

open ticket. I hope I don't have to go home too soon. I hope I'm here for a while.

But either way, I'll be going to Arizona from here to join the Giants and also to join my son, who's with the White Sox in Spring Training.

The Cactus League in Phoenix where they have all the teams, they're having, like -- myself, Ichiro, a couple other players are going in the Hall of Fame in the Cactus League on the 14th. But I'm hoping that we win and I miss the celebration.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

