

World Baseball Classic: Pool D

Thursday, 5 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Nicaragua

Mark Vientos

Workout Day Press Conference



Q. You went from playing once with Freddy and Jeter on a travel baseball team to now playing for Team Nicaragua together. How special is a moment like this?

MARK VIENTOS: You're talking about a dream come true, just playing in the Classic, and now you're playing with guys that you grew up with is a surreal type of feeling. Freddy and Jeter are two guys that I grew up, like, friendly competition. We were pushing each other. We were all shortstops in the 2017 draft, and to see them right next to me playing at the highest level and in the Classic in front of our families is going to be really, really awesome.

Q. As a DH yesterday against the Cardinals, what's the feeling right now changing positions, changing responsibilities in this team, and how is the relationship with Dusty Baker about your position and the defensive lineup, as well?

MARK VIENTOS: Yeah, yesterday I played DH. I think nowadays, everybody is so good, there's so much talent in this game, it's like, the main goal is to win games. So Dusty, you're talking about a legend in the game. He knows what he's doing. Whatever lineup he puts out there, whether I'm playing third, DH, or first base, I'm here for it. I just want to win games, do whatever I can for the team to help them.

I've also had experience playing all three positions with the Mets, so I'm used to it.

Q. Can you talk to me about the influence that Dusty Baker had on you and if you had interaction with Ken Griffey about your hitting and about the game in general?

MARK VIENTOS: I didn't get the chance to meet Ken Griffey in Nicaragua. Funny, I met him like 10 years ago at the All-American game when I was in high school. If you asked me about that conversation, I completely forgot about it. I don't know why.

Dusty, you're talking about a guy that, like I said, he's a legend in the game. Every time he speaks, I'm all ears. My eyes are wide open. I grew up watching him. I grew up seeing him coach, seeing highlights of him play.

It's awesome to be around him. It's awesome to hear the funny stories he's got and all the wisdom he has. I'm honored to be around him.

Q. As a player for Nicaragua, do you see tomorrow a Buster Douglas-Mike Tyson 2.0 in baseball?

MARK VIENTOS: I'm going to be honest, I don't even know what happened in that fight, so you've got to bring it back to this era.

Q. He knocked out Tyson and nobody expected that. He was an underdog.

MARK VIENTOS: So yeah. You're talking about the Dominican Republic, star-studded talent, everybody 1 through 9. But we have a really good team. We have a solid team. We've got players that are hungry. We're on the same ball field as them. We're going out there with the mentality to win and give it our best and see what happens.

Like I said, this is an honor to be in the Classic, and we can't wait.

Q. To go back, not just playing with guys that you've known pretty much your entire life, but you know what baseball means to the culture here. You know what baseball means to the city here. We have seen some amazing things in this building that we don't often see from April through October as far as the crowds and the energy and all that. What's that part going to mean to you, to be a part of just that here?

MARK VIENTOS: I think that's the thing that I'm looking forward to most is just getting that adrenaline, getting that atmosphere. I haven't been in it since the playoffs, since 2024. I think a Major League atmosphere is always great, especially in Citi Field in New York.



But what I've heard from a lot of the guys is that -- a lot of my teammates that have played here, they tell me it's like playoff atmosphere times two. I'm excited to see it. I can't wait.

It's going to be hard to sleep tonight for sure.

Q. We touched on playing with guys from down here. How different is it going to be walking in here knowing that, not just for the country but for Miami and the surrounding area, the kids that played high school here, to be playing in this building representing something so much bigger than just a regular team?

MARK VIENTOS: Honestly, you asking me that question gives me goosebumps because I was thinking about it as I was walking around. Every time I walk around the stadium, I was like, man, growing up as a little kid, I've always wanted to do what I'm doing right now. And to be doing it right now at the highest level and playing in the Classic in my hometown that I grew up in, it's incredible. To be doing it in front of my friends and family is going to be incredible.

Q. I know that you can't reveal the strategy tomorrow against Cristopher Sanchez, but have you given some tips to the guys? What do you remember about the matchup that you had against him in the playoffs? And talk about the atmosphere to face that kind of pitcher tomorrow.

MARK VIENTOS: Great pitcher. The approach on him, like you said, I probably won't say anything on the approach of him.

But no, I feel like that's a guy that I've faced a lot, especially last season, that he's in the same division as us. Yeah, we're going to talk. We're going to have a great game plan, and we're going to give it our best against him. You've got to tip your cap to that guy; he's one of the best pitchers in the game, and it's going to be fun competing against him.

Q. Many people say that the only man besides Baker that has real pressure in this team is Mark Vientos. Do you agree with that?

MARK VIENTOS: Yeah, I accept the pressure. I play this game because of pressure. I play this game because it wakes me up in the morning, and I want to give it my all every single day, and I think that's the pressure of being great.

I think nobody puts more pressure on me than myself. I

think I expect greatness every time I'm out there. Yeah, I always have pressure no matter if I'm playing in a Little League game over here in Miami or if I'm playing in front of 50,000 over here in Marlins Park. So I've always had pressure, and I accept it.

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