

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D

Thursday, 5 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Venezuela

## Manager Omar López

### Workout Day Press Conference



**Q. You have said that you were able to share who the opener for the second game is?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: Yes, Enmanuel De Jesus against Israel.

**Q. What was the process to reach that conclusion?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: In all the preparation that we had after Pablo López left, we were flexible enough, and that's why we decided -- after thinking about the different pitchers that were available according to the pitching programs in the different organizations, and that's why we decided to put him against Israel.

**Q. According to the games that you had as preparation, what do you think you have to attack according to the team's performance?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: We have to wait for the results. It is not a matter of attacking or tackling. In the last couple of days, we have been preparing ourselves after the game. We have spoken yesterday. We had two losses, but we now have to focus on tomorrow's game.

**Q. How do you evaluate how different this team is compared to 2023?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: Well, I have more powerful arms in the bullpen with more repertoire. We have some important absences that have been created, Venezuelan players in the majors, but we can't control that. But thanks to the scouting we had, we made an assessment. We investigated some veteran pitchers with repertoire, Anthony Molina, Carlos Guzman, Christian Suarez. They are great and available options to replace the absences that I mentioned before.

**Q. Since you cannot count on some players, now that you have a committed and talented team, can you tell us how you talked to these players?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: It is important that we believe that we can

win. We are here for a reason. We have a purpose. Yes, we had some moments. We had some frustrations, as well. But it is important to move on and to learn from those experiences. If you continue thinking like that, it is going to be difficult for them to move on.

In my case, I was fast. You can create for a while, but seven years ago, I made a change in my mindset. I am always ready for the very worst case scenario but I hope for the best. If the best happens, I'm not going to be surprised and going to be able to move on, and that's what I pass on to the players. We have Salvador Perez, we have (inaudible) within the team, and of course the coaching staff.

When we hear bad news, the guys express their frustration, but I have to be strong enough to move on with heads up. We're already here in Miami. We have 30 players. We have a great group of players, and we are going to play to win.

**Q. Speaking about the players and the coaching staff with the superstars, how was the integration during these preparation games? What do you expect from that coaching staff, and what do they expect from the players?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: It was a great integration. If you know me, you know that I talked to every one of them. What they did is not important. What is important is what they can add to the players. What they did as players, that's in the past. That's history. But we use something positive to talk to the young players. We are on the same page. We are all working. We had a great integration. We had the meeting today to speak about the game, the Netherlands.

We had two different meetings, and I supervised both meetings. I tried to empower them, and I was surprised. I had a good feeling. When you change a little bit the project, you are anxious. But in a new situation -- I don't want to micromanage everything. I just want to empower them and let them work. We are all happy with that group of coaches that we have a great balance.



**Q. These are obviously very unusual political times. How are you processing that, representing Venezuela in this tournament on U.S. soil? What does this mean to the people in Venezuela to see this team play in the U.S. right now?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: I'm going to be honest with you. I've been working in baseball for 28 years and I don't talk about political stuff, to be honest. I'm here to talk about our Venezuelan team. I'm not here to talk about anything about political situations around the world, around my country. We are alive, we are here, and we want to play for our team to win every single game here.

**Q. After the two friendly games and after the conversation with Acuña, we see that Luis Arraez had hits in both games. Maybe Acuña is going to be more relaxed if he's not the first batter?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: You always try to highlight one or two players. He's going to be the first hitter. That's his position, and he's going to stay there. It's only seven games. This is not the time to make moves. Maybe one or two adjustments, but that's it. You've got to (inaudible) that has been the first hitter, first bat. It is difficult to find a different role for him when you have very good stars. So that's your homework, to make that decision, what to do with Shota.

It's like explosions here or there, that's his specialty.

Acuña was better in the second game. When you start working on that -- and that's what we spoke about. It's not only them but (inaudible), Victor and others who have a group supporting them. You have to understand that Ronald and many of those players, they want to do so many things, and anxiety can be a bad thing for them.

I'm kind of concerned because we have very many young players in the team. But that's what we are here for. We want to work with their mindset. I want to keep my position -- I've got to be quiet. I cannot show anxiety, otherwise this is going to be reflected on them. We are ready for this tournament. It is in our hands to do our best.

**Q. Talking about the preparation games, now you're going to have a house full of competitors. How can this affect the game tomorrow?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: It is more or less what I said before. We had two games in Spring Training. It is important for us to win, of course, but that's okay. We started to make some changes to what is going on, and then realize what is happening. They are going to work on that to improve.

Some of the players were kind of off. Remember that we had to face great pitching. There are so many factors involved. What I can tell you is that those two games are not going to define who we are and what we are going to do after tomorrow. Maybe we can score two runs or something like that and we can win. We have a team, and that's the key in baseball. You can win 10-0, but then they score 12 runs.

We have to look for the negative what happened to start improving, but it's important to start thinking about the positive things. Whatever you say negative, I'm going to pass on as positive to my kids. We have a very versatile team.

**Q. You have talented players in the organization. How can you use that in your favor?**

OMAR LÓPEZ: That's a very good question, and I have so many notes that I have taken, what I'm going to do, if I'm going to put him in this position, if this one is going to be -- how about my defense. I mean, that's versatility. You have to think what to do about that.

We have to be clear; many people say we are going to put the lineup together based on those two preparation games. That's impossible. We were talking with the coaches yesterday. I'm not going to say numbers. I told them, rank the first two or three best bats in our team, and one coach said, are you going to leave this guy out?

No, you cannot consider only those two preparation games. You have to consider this and that and that, and you can choose 85 percent of the situations. These are the two best bats within the team, well, these are going to be the first and second bats. But it depends on the pitcher. You have to take into account who is going to go to base so you can choose the first two bats. This is the thinking process that we use.

If we produce, we are going to be okay. This is going to be important. We have two strengths, which is pitching and defense. Depending on that, we are going to win.

**Q. We know that Mr. Omar was your greatest support since you were in the minors.**

OMAR LÓPEZ: Why are you asking that question? Come on.

**Q. All the learnings that he taught, something that you put on paper, something that you are using in the team with your players during your professional career, something that you used from the lessons that he taught you? I'm sorry, because I know that he's proud**

**as well as your family.**

OMAR LÓPEZ: You know that I appreciate him. It's been four years since he left. What I tried to preserve from him, and that's why I consider myself a person that -- not try, but I do my best in everything that I do, principles, respect to my country. This is something that I learned from him, a person that until the very last day had a very solid position. He always followed his principles, and that's his legacy. It's something that I'm going to use always.

If I were an engineer, I would do the same. But God put me in this bad way, and I'm a famous person, I have to deal with the public, but I don't want to lose sight of my principles. That's what my old man taught me. I listened to him.

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