

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Netherlands vs Venezuela

Friday, 6 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Venezuela

Manager Omar López

Postgame Press Conference



Venezuela 6, Netherlands 2

Q. Out of the six pitchers you used, five had never worked or had previous experience in the World Baseball Classic. Out of the nine in the lineup, five of them had never participated in a World Baseball Classic. Before coming to Miami, you said that especially the hitters were kind of anxious. How did they manage that emotion today?

OMAR LÓPEZ: Well, I have to tell them, to those pitchers, welcome to the real World Baseball Classic. You have seen in the last couple of days that they were anxious or concerned, but they have to believe. In 48 hours, we gave those young players the medication for them to control their emotions. And to me, considering that perspective, starting playing against the Netherlands is a good test so that they believe in themselves and control their emotions.

Q. Destiny seems to work in weird way. You lost Chourio. Javier comes in and he hits a very important home run for Venezuela today. Can you speak about that moment and what that means for the team?

OMAR LÓPEZ: We haven't lost Chourio, okay? Number one, let me clarify that. He's still with us, and he's ready to play.

Number two, that's what happens when you put together a team and you have talent in your country. Anyone can come and do the job. Javier is our super Mario; he's able to play in all the positions.

I wanted to clarify that, okay? Chourio is not out. Otherwise we'd have announced that.

Q. When you have to make those moves and the player plays like that, this is important for the player but also the team, right?

OMAR LÓPEZ: In the last two or three years, we have played against the Marlins, and Sanoja against the Astros has always been great for the national team. Because we need that kind of player for this kind of tournament. When you make those defensive moves, especially Tovar, for example, in the shortstop, Giménez in the second base, and we removed Wilson in order to reinforce our defense. We have very versatile player. Sanoja can play in the left field, for example, and if something happens with Wilson Contreras, he can play on third base. If Eugenio is on the third, I can put him on first base. He's a very flexible, very versatile player.

Q. Considering that the pitching lineup has been hit by the absences but the pitchers you used today, they limited the Netherlands only to four hits --

OMAR LÓPEZ: This is your perspective, but I don't agree with you. You expect names, and sometimes names are not the ones that perform. But the ones that go to the mound are the ones responsible for eliminating the rivals. We don't need names, big names, to be successful in this championship.

Q. Contreras was very important today. Maybe some people might think that this was a surprise. Can you tell us about his performance? He hit a two-base and then two RBIs. Can you tell us about that?

OMAR LÓPEZ: I focused on that in the two exhibition games. I wanted to see the timing of the players. Wilson didn't start in the first game. He came later from the bench. Apparently he was playing the whole game, and that was very important to me. Then I predicted that the Netherlands would manage their pitchers. We knew that Kelly would be the opener. We tried to identify some details where Wilson was perfect for that kind of pitcher. That was another reason for me to decide to put him in the opening lineup today.

Q. Speaking about the pitching, because they speak a lot about the offense of this team, but you have Palencia, Andrés Machado, Avila, and other important



pitchers. You have great pitchers. But this tournament is very complicated. How are you going to deal with that so that they have those results that they got today?

OMAR LÓPEZ: Well, managing that, we defined only the pitchers for the first game. For tomorrow we have to take into account the number of pitches they pitched today, and the tournament gives us this flexibility. We're going to play tomorrow, then we have a day off. After that we play again. So depending on the results, tomorrow we'll be able to manage the bullpen so that the pitchers are fresh for the upcoming games.

We don't want to play two days in a row, but we have to be smart in order to manage the pitchers. The score says a lot. You can have so many plans, but you take a look at the score, and the score says you have to do that. You don't have to do that. You have to bring this pitcher or that pitcher in.

Q. The status of Chourio, what's his situation? Any update? Will he be able to play tomorrow or maybe the day after? With all this situation in Venezuela, politics-wise, there was this group today and they hadn't participated in this tournament before --

OMAR LÓPEZ: We have in the DR so many academies that they can use. In the second game, Chourio had an injury in the finger. Thank God he was wearing the protection or the brace. Everything was okay after the MRI. It's a little bit swollen. He's under treatment. He's feeling much better, and he's ready to do many things except for hitting. We are going to wait until tomorrow. If he is okay, maybe he is going to play. But in a couple of more days, he will be ready for Nicaragua.

Speaking politics, I don't say anything about politics. I work with baseball, not with politics.

Q. (No microphone.)

OMAR LÓPEZ: They're all going to the Dominican Republic. We don't have any league in Venezuela for many years, so I have no comments on that. If I had control of that, to open up academies again, I could give you my opinion, and I could come back and try to improve many things in my country, especially speaking about baseball.

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