

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Netherlands

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Nicaragua

Manager Dusty Baker

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Dusty, you had a successful career as a player, winter ball, managing major leagues. How do you put this experience in your resume?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, this is a wonderful experience. It's wonderful to be around the players, go to see other cultures, other foods. It's made me a more well-rounded person, to realize that people are people, and people are the same all over the world no matter what you hear or whatever. It's great for me to see it with my own eyes.

Q. Last night you said your teams are always teams that have hit, and you jumped on a lot of stuff yesterday. Does the plate approach change today in terms of how you attack the baseball? Randal mentioned you didn't know a lot of the guys yesterday in terms of the hitters, knowing the relationship, but today it's a little different in terms of plate approach.

DUSTY BAKER: Well, not much different because we know even less about this team than we did that team last night. At least some of the guys we had seen on TV. And we don't know hardly any of the guys on the Netherlands. But the thing about it is, no matter what, the ball has to come across the plate. If you're ready for the ball to come across the plate, then good things can happen.

I don't know if it's the approach or the attitude or the fight, but we had plenty of chances and plenty of men on base. And one of the things that's missing in baseball is the ability to drive in runs because we've sort of deemphasized the importance of the RBI.

Like we talk about exit speed, we talk about on-base percentage, but you want guys that can drive in runs, you know, Tony Perez, Miggy, Cabrera. You want guys that you know can drive in runs.

Q. What's the message today versus what the message was last night to the team?



DUSTY BAKER: Well, there was no message last night because you couldn't say too much after the game. The message today is hey, man, you've got to forget yesterday. It's a brand new day. That's the beauty of baseball; every day is different. You can't take yesterday if it was a negative into today, but if it's a positive, you can build on that.

Today is game number one.

Q. Mentally, how do you see the guys this morning?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I really haven't addressed them yet. I'll address them in a while. I'll let them eat breakfast. This was an early morning for us. So I don't know about you; I don't like a lot of talking early in the morning. I tell my wife, wait until I wake up a little bit. We've all got to wake up a little bit first, and then I'll talk to them.

Q. What did you feel yesterday when you saw a lot of Nicaraguan fans cheering for your country?

DUSTY BAKER: I felt like it was great. There were Nicaraguenses in the hotel, on the street. We were coming here from Jupiter, there were guys with flags and hats hanging out the window. So there are a lot of people for us to play for.

Q. The people in Nicaragua really admire you, have good experience for you. Even though you've moved into retirement, I think it's safe to say that Nicaragua won't forget you, and also, you'll never forget Nicaragua. And now you understand the heart of Roberto Clemente from Nicaragua. If the country asks you to come back and help the game in some way, would you consider that?

DUSTY BAKER: Yeah, I would consider that. I'm busy with a lot of stuff in the United States with my family, with my grandkids, with my son. But I'm making a plan to come back. I've been to a couple towns. Went to Estelí. Last time I went to see the volcano, Masaya. I went to Catarina. I want to go see the Lake Mombacho. I want to go see



Mombacho. I want to go see Ometepe. Is that right?

So there's a lot to see. Marvin Bernard, he wants to take me down to the beach, south, close to Costa Rica.

Like I said, there's a lot to see, and I like it. And I like the people.

Q. For someone coaching the Nicaraguan team for the first time this year, when the tournament is over, what is one main thing you want the team to take away from you as a manager?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I'd like the team to take away -- the team and the coaches -- that hopefully we made them better for the future. We helped them coach better, we helped them play better. You never stop learning in baseball. So hopefully they would have taken some positive things from us and pass it down to the next generation and the next generation, because you see how good the Dominican is.

I mean, they started at some point in time, I remember Ozzie Virgil, I think, was the first player in the Big Leagues from the Dominican Republic, and then it went to Juan Marichal and then Pedro Martinez and then Pedro Guerrero, all the great players, Joaquín Andújar that I played with. It starts somewhere. Then baseball starts looking for cousins and brothers and uncles and different lineage.

Hopefully this is the start of something. Maybe even a couple of academies, the way that they've done in Dominican. Like I said, this didn't happen overnight. This probably happened over a 50-year period. Hopefully we'll be better in the future.

Q. As someone who's been around the game for so much of your life, what could you say about how you feel where baseball is, the state of baseball at the moment?

DUSTY BAKER: The state of baseball is in good shape. I think a lot of the fundamentals of baseball are being lost in the proper way to play. But the athletes are great. The state of baseball, there are a lot of former players that are looking for jobs that are not in baseball and can't get jobs, especially a lot of minority players, former players can't get jobs.

Therefore, you have a lot of people teaching now that are teaching from a book versus teaching from experience, and there's no substitute for experience.

Q. The last thing, you mentioned the food. Do you

have a favorite Nicaraguan dish?

DUSTY BAKER: Oh, yeah. Churrasco.

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