

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Netherlands

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Netherlands

## Ozzie Albies

## Xander Bogaerts

### Postgame Press Conference



Netherlands 4, Nicaragua 3

**Q. Ozzie, the Nicaraguan manager had the option to take you to the first base. And there was an extra motivation for you. Bogaerts, you are going to face two teammates from San Diego Padres, Tatis, Jr. and Fernando. What does it feel like to face those two teammates?**

OZZIE ALBIES: First of all, I would like to say that I thought that he would give me balls and put me on first, but it didn't happen. He threw the pitch, and then I made a swing to win the game.

XANDER BOGAERTS: What are the names of the players that you said that? I don't know them. No, joking.

Of course we are good friends. We are teammates. Two of the best players in the majors and in the Dominican Republic team. I want them to be cold tomorrow. I wish that would be the case.

**Q. What was going through your mind the last seconds of the game?**

OZZIE ALBIES: I just needed a hit to keep the rally going or tie the game because we have speed on the bases. I said if he brings his best pitches, the fastball, I've got to put my best swing on it.

**Q. What did you think after you hit it?**

OZZIE ALBIES: Time to celebrate. The moment I hit it -- you know, when you swing and miss, you don't touch the ball, I felt just like that. It hit the perfect spot on the bat so I was really happy it happened at the right time.

**Q. Xander, what's your summary about the match?**

XANDER BOGAERTS: We are on his back. He's small but he's a big boy. He's a strong guy. I knew that for a long time. He went up looking for a fastball, he got his pitch and he didn't miss it.

Throughout the whole game, we couldn't really put it together. A couple hits, a couple base runners, but the same thing with them. Then Jeter Downs who I played with with the Red Sox put a good swing on the ball and hit a homer. In the ninth they were one strike away. And Rafaela started it, and I got a hit, and then Ozzie just hit it out.

**Q. Can you call it an escape? What happened, an escape from defeat, a very bad defeat?**

XANDER BOGAERTS: Better to be lucky, you know? It wasn't looking good for us, it wasn't. But a couple of guys in the lineup we have, you know who they are, and we have experience, and proved it today, and it was vital today.

**Q. The pitch was a fastball; were you waiting for that pitch? What is this moment in your career?**

OZZIE ALBIES: I can't compare that. Like in the 2023 season we were playing against the Mets and we were losing, and we were able to win. I was telling him that. I was waiting for that pitch. I was thinking, if he throws that pitch to me, I cannot miss.

**Q. You had a very important error during the game. What's the mindset of a player like you that plays in the majors to recover after an error like that? It was a ground ball and you made an error --**

XANDER BOGAERTS: Well, the pitchers did a great job to solve that situation. I think that the hitter was 3-1. That could be, yes, another run for them. But our pitching is doing much better than the offense. The offense was good only at the end. So the pitchers were great. They have less experience, but the pitchers are helping us.

**Q. We were talking with Cedanne Rafaela, and he said**



**that you were his favorite player as he was growing up, and he never got to play with you at the same time. To have all these achievements during his career, to be in the majors, playing at that level, playing with a team, Boston, a team you played for, too, what can you tell a player like that that values you so much?**

XANDER BOGAERTS: This is more personal because we are not only from the same country but we played in the same organization, Boston, in this case. I met him in the minors. I used to help him. We had a dream to play together, but it didn't happen.

But the Classic came. He's healthy and this is very important. Sometime the injuries are in the middle of the career, but I'm very grateful for his words. He's a very talented player. Thank God that he was recognized with a Gold Glove this year. He has great skills, and the same with the bat. He's going to have a great future for sure.

**Q. Can you tell us something about the energetic moment you had? You took your time running from second to third. Xander, as a captain, what can you learn from this situation, because the batting part from both teams were down?**

OZZIE ALBIES: Yes, these are very energetic moments. I won't forget that ever. Tomorrow we are going to have a new game, and we're going to continue working, and tomorrow I hope that the bats get hot instead of cold like today.

XANDER BOGAERTS: It has to do with the importance of this game, you know. We knew that the winning team could have chances, and the losing team is behind, 0-2. That's difficult for them to get to the second round. But we were aware of the importance of this game.

Ramirez, he's a very good pitcher. I faced him in the majors very often. He's a veteran. He did a good job. Obando, we didn't know him. He pitched very well, but it was just one pitch, and just he was able to hit the home run.

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