

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Israel vs Venezuela

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Israel

Manager Brad Ausmus

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Brad, what are your expectations for the whole tournament, and how do you evaluate your team?

BRAD AUSMUS: Well, first of all, we expect to compete. That's number one. Obviously there's some very good teams in the division, the Dominican probably being the favorite if you were looking at it from a roster perspective. But it's baseball, and we don't have to win eight out of ten or even four out of seven. We just have to win one game, and that's today's game. We'll worry about tomorrow when it happens.

Look, we've already seen some exciting games in this pool.

The game today was very exciting. It looked like Nicaragua had it wrapped up with two outs and then there you have it, the Netherlands comes back.

It kind of gives teams that are the underdogs a little hope.

Q. What factored into the decision to pitch Dean tomorrow night and to start Simon tonight?

BRAD AUSMUS: Well, Ben is really just kind of acting as an opener. There's a lot of pitch constraints in the WBC with affiliated players. Ben has some restrictions as to how far he can go. We'll use him as much as we can.

But it's going to be a bit of mix and match for us, especially in Game 1. And we like our chances with Dean in Game 2.

There is some strategy involved with who pitches which game.

Q. Two questions for you. The first is how much of the WBC do you get to watch? Are you watching it here, or what are you taking in? You were saying you were watching the game before.

BRAD AUSMUS: I was watching them on TV. Some games I'm watching on TV, some games I'm following on my phone. There's often games going on at the same



time, so you're bouncing back and forth or you're following it on your phone or the app or physically watching it on TV.

Q. Who is one guy that Major League Baseball fans may not know from Team Israel that you think they should be paying special attention to today?

BRAD AUSMUS: You know, in our two exhibition games, we have a shortstop named Cole Carrigg. He's been kind of exciting to watch. He can really run, cover some ground defensively, as well. Switch-hitter, kind of looks like he's got lightning running through his body. He's been fun to watch, and we hope it carries over into the WBC games.

Q. You've been to several of the WBCs now. Given October 7th, given the war with I ran, what's different this time around?

BRAD AUSMUS: Well, obviously the state of the world is different. But at the end of the day, this is baseball. And truthfully we're, like all the participants in the WBC, we're representing our heritage and hoping to bring some joy to people, even in tough times, which these are tough times.

I remember that's what happened in the United States when 9/11 occurred and baseball came back and brought joy to people across America, and we hope in some of these tough times we can do the same thing.

Q. As a Jewish American, can you talk about wearing Israel on your chest, the Star of David on your hat, on your sleeve? Did you have a bar mitzvah? Was it a baseball-themed bar mitzvah if you did?

BRAD AUSMUS: I did not have a bar mitzvah. My mother was Jewish. She had a bat mitzvah growing up. Obviously her parents were, as well. Truthfully it's her side of the family -- her father and my mom who got me interested in baseball. She grew up in Brookline, Mass, outside of Boston. My grandfather was a huge Red Sox fan. Actually Boston Brave fans, then Red Sox fan, and my mom kind of raised me as a Red Sox fan.

I still remember going to Brookline when I was a kid. We'd



go up for a game, I'd stay at my grandparents and my grandfather would drop us off in front of Fenway and then come back and pick us up when the game was over. And still have vivid memories of walking into Fenway, and you're in the middle of a concrete city and then there's this huge grass expanse in front of you. Very good memories.

I think that's the case with a lot of Jewish families in the cities.

What was the other part of your question?

Q. The Jewish pride you feel.

BRAD AUSMUS: It's funny because now it's almost 15 years I've been involved with the WBC, Team Israel. Started in the qualifier in Jupiter, Florida, and I have enjoyed it so much that I've continued to come back. This is now my third go-around with Team Israel, twice as a manager and once as a bench coach. I still have good friends from the 2012 team, and some of those people are in Israel right now.

Q. You've been in a couple of World Baseball Classics. How do you compare both atmospheres?

BRAD AUSMUS: Very similar. I've tried to tell people, go back to 2023 when we were playing the Dominican Republic. As a matter of fact, I had to yell to Ian Kinsler in the dugout so he could hear what I was saying. That's how loud it is here at loanDepot. It is without question playoff atmosphere. The players that are involved, they have the energy is up, the adrenaline is up. You hope they control it.

But it's fun. It really is. I feel like 2023's WBC kind of turned a corner for the organization, and it just seems to keep rising.

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