

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Israel vs Venezuela

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Venezuela

Luis Arraez

Enmanuel De Jesus

Eugenio Suárez

Postgame Press Conference



Venezuela 11, Israel 3.

Q. We know that you have done twice this thing of hitting home runs. You have done this in two Classics. Did you have an extra motivation when you wear the national jersey?

LUIS ARRAEZ: It was not against Phillies but against Atlanta here in Miami. I have to thank God for this opportunity. I mean, I hit two homers and two doubles in the same game, and wearing this jersey. I'm very proud of that.

Q. Luis, earlier you said that if Venezuela wasn't in the World Baseball Classic, you'd like to play with the Dominican Republic. After so many positive reactions by Dominican fans, what player would you choose from the Dominican Republic to choose to play for Venezuela?

LUIS ARRAEZ: Would you like me to be killed by the fans? Retired play or active player? Oh, my God, I would like to have Nelson Cruz, but he's retired. Wow, there are so many players. Jorge Polanco maybe. He's a very good friend. He helped me in 2019. We played three years in a row in Minnesota. He's not in the Dominican team, but I would bring him to my team.

Q. Enmanuel, you set a new record for strikeouts in a World Baseball Classic over Santana. What does that mean to you? And Luis, you know you have represented Venezuela many, many times. When you're capable to do something like tonight, what does that mean to you, not only for the team but for the country as a whole?

ENMANUEL DE JESUS: I'm very proud. I didn't know

about the record. I found out after that. Luis gave me the ball, he told me, keep it. I didn't know that, but being among those names over Freddy and those guys, unforgettable experience for me. I'm very happy to help the national team.

LUIS ARRAEZ: I told him before the game, do it for your son. The wife is pregnant, do it for your family, do it for your son, and he did a great job. Congrats.

Regarding the record, I didn't know that, either, just like you. But I have to thank -- especially because I did it before my family and in front of my family, my daughters, my wife, I have to thank God. That's it. I just have to thank God and my family and the fans that have supported us.

Q. Eugenio, you hit the same homer for you in this Classic. That's common for you, that's okay, but tonight Luis Arraez said that you were the guy for the homers, but today he hit two homers. What did you feel as his teammate?

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: This moment is very special. Not only because of what I am able to do on the field but what they do to motivate us to do the right thing. I have to be thankful, first, with the Lord for the fortune of starting the game with that homer after he hit the double.

Luis represents a lot to us in the lineup. We know that he's a great hitter, and to see his achievements is something very special. I just have to enjoy this moment, to have fun.

He said that I was the home run guy, but he did it twice. I mean, come on. The previous time it was the same. It's beautiful. It's beautiful because it is not only one single person that makes the difference but the whole team.

Being able to do that not only for the team but for the whole country and our families that is supporting us all the time, that's the most important thing. More than players, we are lucky enough to do what we are doing and enjoying it, which is very important.

Q. Luis, you have two two-home run games in your



WBC career and one in your major league career. What is it about this environment that you like so much?

LUIS ARRAEZ: I just try to be simple. I just try to put them in play. Hey, try to hit the ball to center field and put the ball and I did it. I just want to give it to God for giving me the opportunity to hit the homers.

Q. Can I first ask about the 3,000 hit water bottle that you have in front of you?

LUIS ARRAEZ: That's a good question. I want to go there. I want to get 3,000 hits. I got a thousand already but I always put in my mind, every time I read it. I read it, and I say, I can do that, and then that's why you see that here.

Q. When did you start the tradition of putting it together?

LUIS ARRAEZ: I made my debut in 2019.

Q. Having Miguel Cabrera part of the coaching staff, is there anything that you guys have picked up on just how he approaches the game or just for your swings in general?

LUIS ARRAEZ: It's very important. Me, Victor and a lot of guys there, and especially Johan Santana for the pitchers. They are example for us, especially tonight. He said to me, hey, try to hit the ball to center field, and I hit it to right field. But I just tried to find a bearing and hit a homer.

Q. We know that once you have a great game against the Dominican Republic. We know the offensive power of that team. It's going to be sold out. The mindset is different for that kind of game?

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: Well, the mindset is the same. All the games are important to us. All the games to us -- we have to win them all. One game is not more important than the other. We are here to compete, to give everything for our country. Like I said before, we are going to feel the emotions from the defense, and the result depends on who is going to play better the game.

Like I say, baseball is to be enjoyed, and the results depend on what God has reserved for us. Our mindset is a winning mindset. We are going to get that win, which is going to be very important to us. It's going to be a very emotional, exciting game.

I hope that all the fans that bought tickets will go home happy. Well, some happier than the others because there

will be only one winner. But the game is going say the last word about the importance of the tournament for both teams.

Q. A few days ago you told me that you were born at the wrong time. Many people do not recognize your talent. What would you say about that, considering your performance today against Israel? You both were questioned on this kind of performance. Reflect your talent during all this year in the majors. You have had great achievements in your journey, your career. I was thinking about how baseball is being managed today because some people are not aware to see what you are doing.

LUIS ARRAEZ: I always said that God's timing is perfect, and I love those challenges. My mom always said and showed, son, don't ever give up. Don't ever quit. I'm a very sentimental emotional guy. Everything that I say, I say with my heart. Like my mom said, don't ever quit, don't ever give up. It's because she knows how I have progressed.

I train hard. I go to bed today, and I think about tomorrow because I want to improve every day, especially when I represent my country. As far as I have the opportunity, Arraez will be there for my team.

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: Baseball continues advancing, progressing with new rules, different rules, with a different way to evaluate us players. My job is not to put a prize on my work. My job is to go out and to give everything, and the result will depend on what God has reserved for me that day.

I feel in my heart that baseball was unfair with Luis and myself, but we cannot control that. We tried to show on the field who we are and what our value is for many. Our value here on the earth is not -- my value is defined by God, and I said that I'm a son of God and God's child, and as he says, he removes kings. I try to get better and better, and people can do with baseball whatever they want.

I'm not going to question what baseball is because baseball has given me everything what I am today. But they have been unfair with me and with Luis. We thought that something better could happen, but that's life. As Luis said, we're going to prove to them that they were wrong.

Q. You both played for the Marlins previously in this ballpark. How cool is it to see a ballpark like this as electric as it was today?

LUIS ARRAEZ: You said it, electric. When I saw my

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

people from Venezuela and a lot of Latin supporting us, it's a lot of energy. That's why we just tried to do something good for them.

ENMANUEL DE JESUS: Always playing in front of our crowd, having the chance to have the Venezuela jersey on is electric, as you said. Last WBC was the same. I felt awesome on it, and I'm happy to have the support of everybody in here.

Q. When you celebrate on a base after you get a hit, it seems to me that you're playing a drum; is that correct? If yes, tell us the story how that came up.

LUIS ARRAEZ: Yeah, it's a Venezuelan drum, percussion. You can Google that. Tambor Venezuela. We are living our moment. God gave us this opportunity to be here, to play in front of our family, our fans, and playing the Tambor is something beautiful, something we dream about since we were kids, and now I'm living that.

Q. Is there a specific player that thought about that idea?

LUIS ARRAEZ: Most of the guys, Bazarro plays the Tambor in the dugout, and I think we loved the idea, and it was a beautiful one.

Q. Enmanuel, my question is for you. Johan Santana is your coach; what does that mean? And Salvador Perez behind the plate, they say that Salvador, a good catcher with a good pitcher can make the difference and can improve the pitcher's repertoire. Can you tell us about both?

ENMANUEL DE JESUS: I totally agree with you. I grew up and saw Johan pitching. When I was a child, I said I wanted to be like him, but thank God I have the opportunity to have him as a coach. I tried to learn that a lot with him. These days we have been working with my changeup. We know that Johan was an expert in that. I wished I could throw like him.

Regarding Salvador, we all know what he has done in the majors. He's a monster behind the plate. He won the Gold Glove, and it is important to have a horse like this, like Salvador, behind the plate. That's important because he decides the pitches, and he and William, they are great, and they are doing a great job behind the plate.

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