

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Netherlands vs Dominican Republic

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Netherlands

Ceddanne Rafaela

Ryjeteri Merite

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Ceddanne, after a dramatic win such as the one yesterday, how are you feeling today to face the Dominican Republic, the favorite team in this group?

CEDDANNE RAFAELA: We are so excited and confident. Just like you said, the game yesterday was tremendous, and we are focused on ourselves and not on the favorite team. We are focused on the game today, and we are going to go out to do our best. You had to bat yesterday in the ninth inning with two outs. What crossed your mind when you had two strikes? And Ozzie Albies, how was your reaction to that home run?

CEDDANNE RAFAELA: At that point in time, the only thing that I thought is that I couldn't be the last out. I had to give an opportunity to my teammates behind me. We wanted to have a long inning. That was my goal. When Ozzie hit the homer, that was crazy.

Q. After the win yesterday, the whole stadium was packed with Nicaraguan fans, and we saw the homer. If you win today, you could go to the second round, and the offense should wake up for that. What would you feel if you have the opportunity to be the starting pitcher in a game that could be the pass to the next round? What could you do as a hitter, as well?

CEDDANNE RAFAELA: We are confident. We trust each other. I trust him. We had the mindset in yesterday's game, we won. Today we have the mindset in this game. We are going to do our best to win.

RYJETERI MERITE: My coach gave me this opportunity. They trust me, and I trust them. We've got to win today, and I'm focused for tomorrow.

Q. The Netherlands is the only nation in the history of



the WBC with a positive record against the Dominican Republic. Does that have an impact for today's game?

CEDDANNE RAFAELA: No. That's history. We are in the present. We are focused on today and not on the past. We just have to be focused on today's game, to give it all, and to win the game.

Q. Talk about the game coming up against Israel in this tournament?

RYJETERI MERITE: Like I said, my coach believes in me, I believe in myself. I got the support of my teammates. I prepare myself, and now I am here, so let's do the work.

Q. Ceddanne, any words back and forth between you and Brian Bello before this game?

CEDDANNE RAFAELA: Yeah, when he was supposed to start, I heard he was going to start against us, but then they changed it. But when he was going to start, a little bit, yeah.

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