

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Netherlands vs Dominican Republic

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Dominican Republic

### Manager Albert Pujols

#### Postgame Press Conference



Dominican Republic 12, Netherlands 1

**Q. Albert, did you wait to win by knockout? We know Caminero hit a homer, but he received a ball on the arm. What's his condition, even when he continued playing?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Caminero is doing okay. He continued playing, and he hit a homer. He just felt some cramps after receiving that ball in the elbow. Once again, we have to credit the pitching and the batting. Severino did a great job, and then the relievers did a great job, as well.

**Q. You know that you have heard that history chases you. Today you got this win with a knockout, with a great offense by the Dominican team, but what's the feeling after winning a knockout for the first time in a WBC?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: No matter if you win by one run or by knockout, the most important thing is to win the game. We have a very good team with a great offense, a very good bullpen, starters, you name it. But the credit is all for the guys. They are extremely motivated. They are arriving early, doing their exercises and their routine.

Our mission is to win this championship. That's our goal, to have a good pitching staff, a good defense, and doing the moves that you have to do on the bench in order to win the game. That's it.

**Q. Albert, the offense has performed great, no question. But how about the pitching? One run in seven innings and the relievers in the first game were excellent. Your impressions on that and your plans for the next games.**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Like I said before, we are in a very short tournament, especially the first round where the

pitchers have a limited number of pitches. I am telling myself we have done a good job preparing the guys, and they are feeling very, very well. Every time there's a phone call to the bullpen, they are all willing to pitch.

Today we used two relievers. Abreu did a great job, as well. And that's the thing. We prepared this team not overnight. This was a process with Nelson, myself, Wellington and the coaching staff working very hard. We know the responsibility is not only with ourselves but also with our country.

**Q. Austin Wells' homer, good, important contact. The plan for tomorrow is to have Austin as a catcher? Any moves in the lineup for tomorrow?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: You'll see that later. You'll have the news about Austin.

Yes, we are going to have several moves with the bench. But I like the matchup of Abreu and Agustín, especially in the exhibition game that we played in the Dominican Republic.

Tomorrow we're going to be off, and Austin Wells will be able to rest, so Ramírez will have a good chance.

**Q. Talk about what Austin has been able to do behind the plate and the job your pitchers have done throwing to him?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: It's awesome. That's why we wanted him. Nelson and I, we perceived so much to bring him into our team because he fit really well, and glad that he was able to hit the home run today.

But I think the way that he prepares himself with the players, with the pitchers and the starter, I think that's something that there's no secret how he handled things behind the plate. I'm just glad that he's on our side and helping us to win games.

**Q. You continue succeeding as a manager. We all know about your success as a player. You have two**



**wins and there is a key game and the fans are waiting for that, their revenge versus Venezuela. What's the plan for that?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Well, you speak about revenge. The players don't speak about revenge. We are focused on tomorrow's game, first against Israel and then against Venezuela. We are going to keep the same mindset. We are going to continue preparing the players like until now. When the game arrives, we are going to face them.

Tomorrow, the priority is Israel.

**Q. You had Erik González in the lineup when you won in Mexicali. Today he was in the lineup. How do you feel personally speaking?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: I'm very happy for Erik. He's a great player. He deserved all the achievements. He's a player that is able to play in this kind of tournament. Nelson and I called him, and he said yes, I want to be there.

I feel very happy not only for having him but also Junior Lake, two players that are very successful in their careers, not only in the winter league. I'm very happy to have them both in my team.

**Q. Would you define this match as one of the most exciting that you have participated in as a player or as a manager?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Well, maybe, but it's another game. It is just another game. We haven't achieved anything yet. Our goal is to win this tournament. When you get the trophy, then you can speak about the different matches and the emotions and stuff. But so far, we have to face important teams, and our goal is to stay focused on winning and to obtain the victory for our country.

**Q. Albert, the scoreboard was 10-1 and you seemed to be upset. I saw you on the screen. What were you thinking?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: It's very difficult. You know, you see emotions on my face because we have to respect the rival. Our goal is to win the game. And until you're done, this show belongs to the players. It is not my show. The guys have done a great job so far.

No, nothing; I was just thinking maybe trying to give opportunities to the guys on the bench, talking to Julio. When I wanted to bring Soto, he said, no, I want to finish this match, and he made it. But that's the mindset. This is the way I prepared in my career, playing as a professional. Now I continue doing the same as a manager.

Maybe you could say that I'm not happy, but I'm very happy for representing my country once again. At the same time, I stay focused on my goal, which is winning this championship.

**Q. Is there a player that excites you more than Caminero after the homers, et cetera? The Dominican fans are crazy about him.**

ALBERT PUJOLS: I love talking about Caminero because he has a lot to learn yet. He's very talented, and I hope that God continues blessing him and his career. I'm extremely happy to have the water boy in my team. When I called him, I wanted him to be that, the water boy. So I'm very happy that he is here doing a great job.

The six weeks I was with him in the DR helped me to win the championship by Leones. He's a showman, and I can tell you that he's like a little brother to me. And I'm responsible not only for him but for many players that are representing us in this tournament. My job is to try to help them as much as possible. If I see something that they are doing wrong, I try to correct it.

But I don't want to teach them how to play baseball. They are professionals, and they know how to play ball. They have been showing that in their last games.

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