

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Israel

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Israel

Manager Brad Ausmus

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Playing the Dominican, they present their obvious challenges on the field. From a preparation perspective, how does a game like tonight differ or present its challenges when there's a little bit more of the unknown across the dugouts with less familiarity with your opponent?

BRAD AUSMUS: Yeah, it's a little bit more old school baseball when you don't have as much information. We do have some information, but it's certainly not like a major league roster where you have tons of data to sift through. It's like high school baseball in terms of preparation.

And you've got to communicate as players. For pitchers that we don't know or pitchers we haven't seen or pitchers we have no information on, guys in the lineup, they've got to talk to each other after they see an at-bat and pass it down the line.

Q. We've seen a couple walk-offs in this tournament for the first time. What do you think about how this has gone, what the competition is like? We've heard from a lot of people involved about the purpose of the tournament and how it's related to big leaguers. How do you feel about it from a competitive standpoint?

BRAD AUSMUS: I think it's been great. I think 2023 is where it turned the corner, where it really became an international tournament that people paid attention to. The energy is phenomenal. I think the players love representing their heritage. I think what has happened since 2023 and even before, to some degree, is players that play for their country in the WBC relay the experience to other players, and now more and more want to join.

Q. What's it like to look across the diamond and see a guy like Dusty Baker at the helm of a team like Nicaragua in terms of his experience in baseball and everything he's meant to the game?



BRAD AUSMUS: I've been looking across the diamond and seeing Dusty Baker for a few decades, so it'll be a familiar sight. Played a number of teams he managed, managed against him, know Dusty, super human being. Obviously extremely accomplished Hall of Fame manager, accomplished player in his own right. But I'm very used to seeing Dusty across the way.

Q. I was talking to Kevin Youkilis who had to respond to an attack on him on social media. What do you make of the fact, how come you're coaching Team Israel? I wonder if players are getting that type of hate and your response that he felt the way he needed to respond to set the record?

BRAD AUSMUS: That's Youk being Youk. Youk likes to engage. I tend to be a little more private on social media. But Youk is -- I mean this in the best possible way, unique and fun to be around and fun to have around. We didn't have him yesterday but we have him back.

Yeah, it's unfortunate in this world and in an age where there's anonymity on social media, people say stuff that they wouldn't say to someone's face.

He enjoys the back and forth, others don't.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

