

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Israel

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Nicaragua

Manager Dusty Baker

Postgame Press Conference



Israel 5, Nicaragua 0

Q. Dusty, runners left on base has been kind of the story of the tournament for you guys. Is that something mentality-wise that gets into everybody, you start to press a little bit, can't get a bunt around?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I don't know, and this has been going on since we played Cuba. Seems like we get bases loaded and don't get anything out of it.

We certainly got to go back to the drawing board. I know Randall is talking to the hitters as far as the approach and mentality that the pitcher is in trouble, not you. So this is something that we've got to work on.

Q. What did you think of Dean Kremer tonight, and when you're watching that ground ball going to third base, are you hoping it hits the bag like it did against you last night?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, it wasn't that close to the bag. I've seen Kremer before. He's a tough pitcher. He knows how to pitch. He throws the fastball inside, especially on the hitters. I think our first five or six hitters, the first pitch was a fastball, and we didn't make the adjustment. And then the second time around, he was throwing the splitter and different pitches.

He's a major league pitcher. I mean, this guy can pitch. We didn't have a lot to show for it.

Q. Your thoughts on Carlos Rodriguez and the start he was able to give you guys on the mound?

DUSTY BAKER: Yeah, he was good. He was real good. I hope he carries that same quality to his own season in Milwaukee. We thank him for coming. It's a long ways from Phoenix to here. He came in and did his thing.

Q. They believed that the third game would be a good one. They'd been playing very well in the first two games, but the team didn't respond. I believe today was the worst game.

DUSTY BAKER: Well, you know something, when you're not getting hits and the pitcher is dealing like he was dealing, it's always a worse game. The pitcher really controls the game. When the pitcher is on, you look flat.

We were ready to play, it's just that the pitcher threw a great game. Here it was in the fifth inning, and before you could look up -- and we only threatened like that one inning with the bases loaded and it ended in a double play. You've got to give him credit. He's a major league pitcher, and this guy knows how to pitch.

Q. This loss officially eliminated you guys from advancing. You do have one game left against Venezuela. How much of a pride factor is it to try to go out there and get Nicaragua's first win ever in the Classic in that last game?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, if you've got a game to play, you play to win, no matter what's at stake. I've been on first-place teams and I've been on last-place teams that you had the last game of the season, and you certainly want to go home on a good note.

It really hurt last night to lose that game, but last night's game had nothing to do with tonight.

You've got to go out there and you've got to play. You're getting paid handsomely to go play, and that's what you've got to do. Who knows, tomorrow everybody could be looser with nothing at stake. I'm going to play my best lineup and try to do what we can to win.

Q. Do you think the team has recovered psychologically from yesterday's loss? What was the conversation from you to the guys before the game?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I can't tell you all that. That's between me and the guys. You know, one loss doesn't go



into tomorrow unless you don't have a very strong mind and if you don't have strong confidence.

Yesterday, like I said before the game, we were weeping into the night, but you wake up in the morning and the sun is up, and it's a brand-new day.

Q. Today was a difficult loss, and you already faced Dominican Republic in the first game. Tomorrow it's going to be Venezuela. You already saw some of these guys in the major leagues. What do you think is going to be the key tomorrow to try to get that win because it's going to be a very important game for Venezuela tomorrow to achieve the qualification.

DUSTY BAKER: Well, you know, you don't want to go down easy. Like, you want to go down fighting. That's what baseball is about. That's what life is all about. You go down fighting until your last breath.

I know those guys over there in Venezuela. I played in Venezuela. They've got a good team. And their manager is a good manager. He was one of my coaches in Houston. So was about half the guys over there.

Yeah, we're going to come out -- and I don't like the word "spoiler" because that's a loser's mentality. So you've got to come out and try to win the game.

Q. Do you have anything to say to the fans? It was an extremely partisan crowd on you guys' side.

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I just want to thank them for their support and their positive attitude. Even after last night's game, I heard, oh, man, Dusty, you're doing a good job and the team is doing a good job and they're trying really hard.

Not to take anything away from the United States, but I've never had those comments after a tough loss. I'd always hear, how come you didn't do this and how come you didn't do that?

It's important that we win tomorrow's game for them.

Q. Three games, three different lineups, you couldn't find the ideal lineup?

DUSTY BAKER: No, I was trying. I mean, that's my job. You try to match up their pitching, match up what you need on defense, match up if you need outfield defense, if you have a team that's going to throw fly balls or a team that has speed. You try to do all you can.

Like tonight, we could have had 15 guys on the field and it

wouldn't have done any good. Tonight was a night that you can't say exit speed beat you because the exit speed was very low outside of a few balls. They found holes, and there's not much that you can do about that.

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