

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Venezuela vs Nicaragua

Monday, 9 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Nicaragua

Manager Dusty Baker

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela 4, Nicaragua 0

Q. Dusty, previous to the game, the manager Omar Lopez said you represent for him a mentor. What does it mean for you to be facing the Venezuelan team tonight especially with Omar Lopez in front?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, he'll be a manager some day in MLB. You know, the older guy never likes the mentor to beat him. They got a good club and I wish I could stay here for Wednesday's game. It's going to be like two heavyweight fighters and I'm going to be somewhere where I can watch on TV. It's going to be a heck of a game with two supreme countries playing ball against each other.

Q. After this time being with Nicaragua, what's the feeling, frustration, happiness, joy. What are your feeling after being with Nicaragua?

DUSTY BAKER: I love being in Nicaragua. I don't feel much joy and happiness after a loss, but the teams that beat us had excellent pitching. They also had good hitting, especially the Venezuelans and the Dominican Republic. We're not where they are yet. Hopefully in the near future we'll catch up to them.

But I just told my club that that's something to work towards, something to look forward to, and remember the feeling in your heart and in your mind that you had after these games.

Q. Officially this could be your last game as a manager?

DUSTY BAKER: Yeah, well, every game could be my last game as a manager. At 76 years old this could be my last day. So you've got to enjoy every day. I was talking to some people and maybe if I'm still around and still feeling healthy, I mean, who knows. Maybe I could -- I'm not going back down on the field in the MLB, but maybe Olympic



team, to represent your country maybe.

Q. Dusty, your pitching staff actually did a really good job against Venezuela tonight. Ronald Acuna did most of the damage. What do you think of game he had and the kind player he is?

DUSTY BAKER: Hey man, Acuna does damage all the time. This guy's a combination of speed and power. He's great outfielder. I was surprised on how well he still ran after the injuries and I didn't think that he was going to run considering the season's right around the corner, but that's how he plays.

We did do a good job against him. They scored four runs and three of them were unearned. He's got to pick a game up because you can't give a team like that with that pitching any unnecessary runs. But we played them tough and I'm sure these guys, I told them to go home and hold your head up and feel proud that you represented your country and that you will be better in the future.

Q. Dusty, you were mentioning before this Classic that you were getting doctors checkup, that this could be your last wave, that you were planning to enjoy it. What do you take, and you have a very long career, but is this different for you? It was a different experience? What did you take from the World Baseball Classic?

DUSTY BAKER: Yeah, it was a different experience because I've seen it on TV but I've never been a part of it. At the age I am right now there aren't too many things that I haven't seen and this was one of them. Like I said, I had seen it on TV, I had players on my team who had played, Jose Altuve and just different players on the team. I saw their excitement and their joy and emotion in playing basketball.

Like I said there's nothing that compares to Latin American baseball. I've been in Puerto Rico, in Mexico and I played in Venezuelan, but this was, I don't know, off the hook.

Q. After such a long and successful career as manager and player, how did you reflect on your



chance of being inducted to the National Hall of Fame in Cooperstown?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I haven't really reflected or thought about it much. I'm in probably ten or fifteen Hall of Fames now, National, High School Hall of Fame for different sports and I'm in the Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame and Black American Hall of Fame. So there's only a couple Hall of Fames left. But after Bill Belichick didn't get in the Hall of Fame, then anything's possible.

Q. Before asking the question, I would like to thank you as a Nicaraguan and I would like to thank first off my college and the fans for accepting managing our national team. Thank you so much for that. Nicaragua is your home and we will welcome you always and we hope that you come soon. Now the question. I have worked with many national coaches. Ronald is considered as a manager prospect. Do you think that Ronald looking forward would be ready to manage the Nicaraguan team in a WBC?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, they have some fine managers down there, some guys that really know baseball. I missed, what's his name, Sandor, I missed Sandor. He's a fine manager, too. So you've got to have more than one. But I think that Ronald is probably a little bit younger and I think that both of them have a great chance of being managers because they pay attention. They try to learn.

Ronald came in and told me thank you for the opportunity and the fact that he learned because Ronald wouldn't have been here if Sandor had been able to come. Then I wanted to give him a handshake but he gave me a hug. That's how the Nicaraguan people are.

Q. So you mentioned, you compared these other countries like Venezuelan and Puerto Rico like heavyweight fighters. Based on your experience in this tournament what steps does Nicaragua have to take to become one of those heavyweights because today they did outwit Venezuelan 7 to 5. So what steps do you think they have to take to get to that point?

DUSTY BAKER: No. 1, I think we had one home run in this series. It would help if you had a few more home run hitters, a little more speed when you don't hit home runs. And I don't know where those guys, do the people in here understand what gasoline is? They had some gasoline, and I'm trying to figure out where they got this high petrol from because they brought in one guy and he's throwing 98 and then another one I never heard of and he's throwing 97.

And then they told me the last guy -- I would like to know

who they're with and who they pitch for and they told me the last guy was in Japan. So I don't see him being in Japan too long.

Q. Dusty, how do you feel will be your next few days as a human after being manager again in a tournament like this?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, the next few days, like I told my team, I wasn't ready to go home, I'm not ready to go home yet, but I've got to go home because I have an obligation with the Giants. So I've got to go help the Giants in Phoenix and go watch my son, because I call him every day or he calls me every day. He's with the White Sox. That's what I'm going to do the next few days, the next week, be with the Giants and to be with my son.

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