

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Venezuela vs Nicaragua

Monday, 9 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Venezuela

Manager Omar Lopez

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela 4, Nicaragua 0

Q. How would you evaluate your bullpen, especially with Guzman and Suarez that you haven't seen in the first couple of games yet? And follow up question, are you ready to announce the pitcher for Wednesday?

OMAR LOPEZ: Actually, it was not what we were looking for. We wanted most of the pitchers to have an opportunity. We used today Suarez and Guzman to see what they could do. I saw them pitch in West Palm Beach, but it was a different situation, a different stage, a different adrenaline. There were only 3,000 Venezuelans and today there were many more.

I liked what I saw. Guzman had more days off and that could affect him a little bit. We want to give an inning to Palencia but once Guzman's warmed up, I didn't want to stop that. When a pitcher is warmed up, he can not join the game again. That's a rule all over the place with all the MLB pitchers. Eduardo Rodriguez will be the starting pitcher against the Dominican Republic.

Q. Omar, in history of the Classics, this is the sixth time that Venezuelan does not allow runs. Are you happy about that? You were speaking about that. How happy are you about it?

OMAR LOPEZ: I don't think about those things, especially about no runs, but I think about the potential that we have in the bullpen. We're conducted the study regarding who was coming or not, relievers, similar to what we have in the team, and we try to look for fast pitchers who were able to attack the zone, et cetera. Speaking about no runs, games, that's not surprise for me because the data can say something but then the execution is not the best one.

If you take a look at the history the last couple of years, if you tried to scout some pitchers, you can realize that there is some consistency, but this is not going to do something



productive in this Classic. I just want to see them confident in themselves that they prove how strong they are on the mound. Sometimes something is not going well, they can make some tweaks, some adjustments. This is what I'm seeing right now.

Q. It's important to enjoy the victory today, but speaking about the Wednesday's game, how are you going to face the game vis a vis the team that might be the best relievers in this group, in this pool?

OMAR LOPEZ: I said that before with all due respect. The game, and you are expecting -- everyone is expecting that game. The only thing that is going to be decided, who is going to be the first place in the pool.

Let's take a look at the worst case scenario. Let's suppose that the Dominican Republic and us and then they have to face Korea. The Dominican Republic can lose. To me, it makes more sense. No matter what happens on Wednesday we want both teams to go to the quarterfinals and then we go to the semifinals. That would be the most important game.

We have great relievers as well, not only them. The stats say that. They have a good offense, we have a good offense as well and we are going to face that game just the same with preparation to play good baseball, to play aggressively and then try to get the final result.

Q. Omar, many players on the field have said that they really love the support of the country, and we have seen that in the social networks and also in the stadium. What do you think about the atmosphere, today over 20,000 people were in the stadium and we saw that in the band, the noise, the dancing and the Venezuelans screaming throughout the game?

OMAR LOPEZ: I can guarantee that we are receiving the energy from the Venezuelan people not only on the social networks but also at the hotel, at the stadium. When the guys feel that energy, of course this is an extra motivation and they want to fight more and more to give some joy to the people in Venezuelan.



Q. When the Classic started, the outfielders were -- we wanted to see Jackson, Wilyer and Ronald in the outfield. Today you had that trio of outfielders. What's your impression? Are you going to keep them? Are they ready to continue with this?

OMAR LOPEZ: Jackson came back to action, good swings, he's doing OK. We have some training tomorrow. Yes, this is a dream team for anyone to have those three outfielders. But when we see the roster, Sanoja is a guy that is respected by Venezuelans. Nobody speaks different about him, but having those four players, I can tell you that we're going to have a great, solid defense in the outfield for Venezuelan.

Q. One of the positive points of Venezuelan has been the defense, great jewels at the defense by Torres, Gimenez and others. I would like to know your impression about that specifically considering that Venezuelan has Platinum Gloves, Golden Gloves, et cetera and those players in the MLB?

OMAR LOPEZ: Not only Venezuelan, I would say that Latin America, Dominican Republic, Venezuelan, the Golden Gloves that we have, Puerto Rico, you name it, we have a great defense. It is basic to have those players in this kind of tournament. Especially when we play on artificial grass, it is important to have players with that -- players so that they can react, for example, when there are some ground roll. So that's a great advantage when you have this kind of game, we're going to have good pitching, good defense. It's no secret you might have the very best offense of the world from 1 to 9, but with good pitching and a good defense you can win 1-0 and get the victory.

Q. You were speaking about Sanchez and Guzman that pitched today for the first time. Did you have a conversation with them before or after the game about the performance they had today and how they helped the team?

OMAR LOPEZ: No, not before or after the game, I haven't talked to them. I spoke with them much earlier because I wanted to know about his availability. We knew that they were able to be here. We explained about the situation, if something could happen. But today, no, I haven't talked to them yet. I had the chance to give them that opportunity to pitch in the Classic. Maybe later or tomorrow during the training I will talk to them to see how they feel.

But I can tell you something. I wanted to shake the hand and hug Carlos Guzman. I felt he was kind of nervous or he was emotional with adrenaline. Now he can say that he wrote history for him and for his family when he played

today.

Q. What were your impressions of his all-around game and what is it like watching him when he's showing off his speed, his power, everything in the same game?

OMAR LOPEZ: I just mentioned to one of the reporters that in baseball, if you have pitching and defense, you have a lot of chance to win games. You just need one hit, homer, or somebody to step up and be the hero and tonight was Acuna.

Also great job by Arraez, the double down the right field line. The base running was really good, we were aggressive. That's what take us to the other level. That's the game and Acuna was our hero tonight.

Q. Albert was saying when he has somebody like Tatis leading off who has power, speed, you have somebody like Acuna who does that too, is it nice to have somebody who can bring so many different facets to that spot?

OMAR LOPEZ: Of course, of course. Dominican have that guy, Tatis, he's incredible professional ball player, and we have Acuna. And we have another one too hitting second in the first two games, which is Maikel Garcia. He's capable to do the same stuff that Acuna does, so I hope both step up against Dominican and went 3 for 3 with a couple homers and driving in like six runs. And then we pitch, we play defense, we go to the first place. That's it. That's very easy to say it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports