

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Venezuela vs Nicaragua

Monday, 9 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Venezuela

Ronald Acuna Jr.

Jackson Chourio

Postgame Press Conference



Venezuela 4, Nicaragua 0

Q. Facing again the Dominican Republic in the Classic and especially how to work on the mental part, knowing that they are professional players on both teams, is it complicated to manage that to avoid some issues on the field.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Difficulties will always be on the field. It is important to manage the anxiety, the adrenaline. We're going to have 40,000 people here at the stadium. There is a classic rivalry between both countries and we hope to win, which is the most important.

Q. How about betting?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: The loser is going to wear the other team's uniform.

Q. We expect a sold-out on Wednesday as always. Venezuelan and the DR with a great show, but you're playing to see who is going to be the first place in this group. The next rivals will be Japan or South Korea. Japan is stronger than Korea. No one is willing to face the three-time champions. So there will be something extra that game not only flags.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: I want to make my teammates' life easier. Japan, just like you said is a very tough team, they play very aggressively. We do the same. Let's see what happens.

Q. Jackson, you are wearing a Venezuelan jersey for the first time in your career. Your brother, your parents are very proud of that. You almost hit a homer in the first at-bat.

JACKSON CHOURIO: I was very anxious. It was a very special moment for me. But things happen for a reason.

Very happy for the job that we have done as a team. Thank God we won.

Q. Ronald, we see you, we see you with that feeling, the behavior playing the drums, speaking in the dugout. What's the atmosphere like in the dugout? You as a captain, I would say as a leader, you're part of the leadership. You're even dancing tambore or percussion. You hit two times to the right field that was with intention.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Salvador is the leader, but we're all on the same page. The energy is 100 percent, especially now that we're going to play the DR, one of the best teams in the world. We just have to control our emotion. Everyone dances tambore.

Q. (No microphone.)

JACKSON CHOURIO: I just wanted to wait for my pitch. I just wanted to hit a fly to drive him in. I was enjoying, I just wanted to do my best and to give a good show to my fans.

Q. Before the Classic you said that you would hit those homers at the right time. You hit a great homer. Tell us a little bit about that and your connection with Arraez, Maikel as well. Tell us about your connection with Arraez and Maikel.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Every time we go out I try to get to the base as much as possible because I know behind me we have Maikel and Arraez and the game is easier for me, I just try to go to the base and to make his work easier, their work easier.

Q. You seem to do -- you got on base, contributed to all the runs. What did you see today that allowed you to ignite the offense?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: I see a lot of (inaudible) from our team. I put the ball in play like three time. I try to get on base the most I can and play the Dominican Wednesday.

Q. Jackson, real quick, what does it mean to have



somebody like Ronald hitting at the top of your lineup?

JACKSON CHOURIO: This is something super special. He has been an example for me. I'm very happy for that.

Q. Ronald, Dusty Baker said he knew you had power but he was surprised you had the same speed after your injuries. How much pride do you have in having the power and the speed and being able to affect the game as many ways as you do?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: That's part of my game. Sometime I can hit a homer, sometime I can play defense, so I can do all.

Q. Tonight was your night, the previous nights were Arraez and Sanoja and Contreras. Can you tell us about the performance of the team? Omar Lopez has said it is difficult to put together one lineup because of the talent he has in the team. Jackson, question for you. How about the outfield with Wilyer, yourself? Many people spoke about that talent that we will see in the outfield, that was a high expectation. Can you tell us about that experience?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: We do have a lot of talent. We have so many stars. If I don't hit -- if I don't hit, you have Arraez or Chourio. So we have a lot of quality on the team so anyone could be the hero.

JACKSON CHOURIO: There is a great talent in the outfield. Actually not only that, the infield is tough too, but everyone is doing their job. He had never played in the left field, but he's doing his best, doing a great job.

Q. You have always shown a very good chemistry with the Dominican Republic. You were offered their residence, right? In the superstar game they gave you a Dominican ID. Is that an extra motivation that you are going to face rivals but at the same time great friends?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: I'm very happy to play the Dominican Republic. Like I said before, one of the best teams in the world. They adopted me and I have to be grateful for the love that I have felt.

But we hope to win on Wednesday. This is our goal.

Q. Acuna, another question that has to do with your dancing. As a child, how important was music in your life? I know that music connects people but in the neighborhood, in the savannah, what recollections do you have related to dancing as a child?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: I always saw my cousins that were

playing in the majors, every time they come to town, they always play loud music in their cars and that motivated me.

Q. Question for both. After a game such as today with great performances and considering that this tournament is very short and intense and so important for you, the day off tomorrow, one day off, is it good or not that good?

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Well, days off are always good because you can rest a little bit. We are going to have training so we keep the pace. It is just another day off, another day off.

Q. Ronald and Jackson, for those players that haven't had the experience of being in a Classic or playing a Classic such as (inaudible) et cetera in Venezuelan, how do you explain to them that you have that experience of playing important games in your career. And Wednesday's going to be the Caribbean final. The whole stadium was shaking including the press box.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Of course I played with La Guaira and I have played with Magallanes and the atmosphere is different such as the one we're going to live once a day but more intense. Your turn, your turn to speak.

JACKSON CHOURIO: I agree with you. Yeah, it's going to be a very special unique game but I'm going just to enjoy it. I love playing in this atmosphere, and I tried to grow in this situations and I take advantage of these opportunities.

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