

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Israel vs Netherlands

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Israel

**Jake Gelof**

**Matt Mervis**

**Harrison Cohen**

Postgame Press Conference



Israel 6, Netherlands 2

**Q. Jake, you had multiple big hits for the team today. What do you think you're doing so well at the plate that enabled it?**

JAKE GELOF: Yeah. I think I was just sticking with my approach, just staying with the middle of the field and just trying to hit pitches in the zone.

**Q. Cohen, you were still in your uniform when you came out of the game a couple innings ago. Have you sat down at all since you came out of the game?**

HARRISON COHEN: A little bit. I saw my parents and my fiancée after the game. I got to see my parents, my fiancée a little bit, soaked it in a little bit, but I was just really fired up for the team to kind of dominate like we did, I would say.

**Q. How much do you think this is going to help you going into this season possibly getting on the Yankees roster?**

HARRISON COHEN: I'd like to think it will help, but honestly, like, the biggest thing I can control is just what I do every single day. Those are decisions that are out of my control, and all I can do is just kind of focus on my work and my day-to-day prep and just do the best I can whenever I get an opportunity.

**Q. Matt, two doubles for you today. How good did that feel to really get the ball all the way as far out as you could?**

MATT MERVIS: It felt good. You know, the first few games, I hadn't really hit the ball hard. Even going back to the last WBC, I didn't really show how I wanted to. So

yeah, it felt good.

A couple insurance runs in the first one, and then just got a fastball pretty deep on the second one and hit it to left center.

**Q. And for all three of you, what do you think that this tournament, the performance that you guys had, could do for the future of baseball in Israel and the greater Jewish community?**

MATT MERVIS: Yeah. I think it means a lot. The reason I had my phone up here is because my dad sent me a text saying Danny Grossman, who was a reporter with Team Israel last year, called during the game and had to jump off the call because the bomb sirens were going off in Israel.

So I really think it's easy to think about the baseball game, but really, we're trying to -- this is Israel baseball. I think we're trying to inspire kids in Israel to grow the game and, you know, become the next generation of Israeli baseball players.

HARRISON COHEN: Yeah. I think Matt hit it right on the head. It's been an honor to wear this uniform, and I'm looking forward to seeing what this brings to Israel baseball and really, like, very proud to wear this uniform and very happy for this experience with these guys.

**Q. Not just Israel baseball in Israel, but also to get more Major League players onto the team. You go 2-2 and have a game like tonight, does that help you recruit the Harrison Baders and you guys who are pretty good people to get on the future of Team Israel?**

MATT MERVIS: Of course. Yeah. Anytime we can show well and try to prove that we're a competitive team, I think we'll influence guys who are on the fence in deciding if they want to leave spring training and leave their clubs to come compete here.

I think anytime we prove that we can compete internationally and put up a good game against anybody is good for that.



**Q. For Harrison, what was some of your biggest takeaways from being around this coaching staff this week, especially when you might have an opportunity to be in a dugout again with Brad Ausmus pretty soon with the Yanks?**

HARRISON COHEN: Yeah. The biggest thing for me I wanted to take away from this experience was just kind of learning, learning as much as I can, making connections with guys, and I feel really strongly about -- that I was successful in doing that. The coaching staff here was great. The team was great. And I definitely have a lot of memories and a lot of hopefully lifetime connections.

Being with Brad in the dugout was awesome, and, you know, obviously hopefully that is not the last time. So you can only look towards the future and be really excited about what is possibly to come.

**Q. For Matt, how do you feel like this team kind of grew together over this last week? I feel like it was a really short time check, but do you think this group really got to gel?**

MATT MERVIS: Always. I think it's always easy to walk in a locker room when you have something really strong in common with everyone else. So it doesn't take the really early spring training kind of get to know everybody, shake hands, small talk. It's pretty comfortable walking into that locker room. Everybody's friends as soon as they meet each other.

We have Jewish guys, we have guys with Jewish wives, a grandmother's Jewish. It's not everybody with the same background, but there is that one bonding factor that makes it really easy for everyone to get to know each other and become a good team quickly.

**Q. And then for Jake, what kind of advice did you get from Zach either before this tournament, during this tournament as things have gone on?**

JAKE GELOF: Yeah. I got a text before I started and it was kind of like just go out there and do what you can do. Just go out there and be yourself and play the game hard.

Obviously he touched on the environment and just kind of how insane it is and was during this tournament, and he just said to soak it up in the locker room and pick guys' brains, and these are going to be some lifelong friendships.

**Q. Guys, I'm so proud of you, honestly. Great win, great tournament, great getting to know all of you guys.**

It's been eight, nine days of being together. Can you talk about the wins, yes, but the pride you felt in wearing Israel on your chest, in playing as Jewish-Americans for the country of Israel in such a tumultuous time? I want your feelings about what you felt, especially after such an incredible win.

HARRISON COHEN: Yeah. I have a huge sense of pride, you know? Playing for Team Israel has always been a dream. To be able to participate in not -- in the WBC and wearing Israel across my chest as not only just a token of where you've gotten to in your career, but as a token to how I was brought up, how I was raised, my parents, my family, my heritage, you know, every single thing that kind of led me to this point. It's really, really cool to be able to look back and reflect and see kind of all the people that have impacted you in some way, to be able to have this opportunity. And just a ton of gratitude to be able to wear this uniform.

MATT MERVIS: I think he nailed it. Pride and gratitude are the two words that come to mind. Anytime I can represent my family, and especially my grandmother, who grew up in Israel, means a lot to me. She was a huge part of my childhood, yeah. I mean, it's emotional thinking about it, but I miss her and just want to make her proud. So wearing this uniform and playing the game for Israel means a lot to me.

JAKE GELOF: Yeah. I mean, like, same stuff. Proudful, grateful, you know, to be able to represent my family and my heritage. You know, hopefully next time be able to play with my brother and kind of get that sense as well.

But, I mean, it's meant so much to me to be a part of it and have Israel across my chest. And even today, you know, with the fans, you know, showing out and getting the win and just seeing all the smiles and stuff on everyone's faces was awesome.

**Q. You made a lot of Jewish-Americans, young Jewish children very proud, I just have to say that to you. And can you all say "am yisrael chai." I love that.**

**Q. A seminal moment of my generation of American Jews was when Sandy Koufax refused to pitch on Yom Kippur. Do you see yourselves being the next generation of American Jews?**

MATT MERVIS: Yeah. I think that's our platform. That's why this tournament is so important is not just for Israel. Everyone represents their country and there's a huge sense of pride in inspiring the next generation. So for us to be able to do that for you Jewish-American baseball

players is very important, it's a great opportunity. I think this tournament does a good job.

HARRISON COHEN: I think all of us, we were three Jewish kids wishing that we were in this position. And yeah, I think that knowing that there are hopefully people out there thinking the exact same thing, kids out there thinking the exact same thing and looking to us, it's a very reassuring feeling and rewarding feeling.

JAKE GELOF: Yeah, same exact thing. You see this on the calendar every couple years and you circle it. When you're a young kid, I know my brother and I have circled this on our calendar when he was able to play in it and now I've been able to play in it.

So it's just always looking forward to growing the game anywhere, for us playing for Team Israel. You see it with young kids from the Dominican and how much pride they have for representing their team. I think this is just a great opportunity to grow the game as a whole. It's been really fun to be a part of it and be able to watch it as well.

**Q. Kind of just to expand on what Jake just said, really, can you guys talk about what the atmosphere is like and how that differs from or if it differs from other games you guys have played in, other leagues, other tournaments? I know it's loud here, and some of it's the indoors, but can you talk about what the environment is like and how that hypes you up in a game?**

MATT MERVIS: Yeah. It's impossible to not be excited when you're playing in front of crowds like that. I don't have playoff baseball experience, but I have to imagine that the Dominican Republic and Venezuela games are pretty similar. I know they weren't sold-out crowds, but the noise was definitely there. The energy was there. The environment just feels like a really important baseball game, which it is. You know, there's definitely a regular season feeling, and this tournament surpasses that.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)