

# World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals

Thursday, 12 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Japan

### Shohei Ohtani

#### Workout Day Press Conference

**Q. What advice were you giving Murakami about his swing in the dugout during the last game, specifically about how he was holding his bat and his elbow?**

SHOHEI OTANI: We were just talking about the batting with other people, and I was just answering the questions. And, of course, I asked some questions too. And I think we just shared our thought process. That's all.

**Q. How did it go with your light BP session today? How did you feel? And do you feel like you're on track to be in the Dodgers rotation when their season begins?**

SHOHEI OTANI: Of course, I'm just -- just practice together and I think I just hit myself well simultaneously. I think I run a full (indiscernible) so I think I am just preparing for the new season. I think everything is going well.

**Q. You recently faced Ranger Suarez in the post season in the series against the Phillies. What do you think are the biggest challenges when facing a lineup like the Venezuelans?**

SHOHEI OTANI: Of course, the lineup and the pitcher and the bullpen pitchers, I think they have a very high level of team. So I think there will be a pitcher that I played against in the past or maybe a brand new pitcher that I never have, and then there will be the batter.

I think that the other team will be the same thing. I think the key is see if we can adjust to the new team. I think it's going to be a very important thing, and it will be the very key for success.

**Q. First, how do you change your preparation for this kind of a short tournament? And number two, do you have a favorite Dominican player?**

SHOHEI OTANI: I don't really change the prep process. I



think that during the season, I think I want to do the routine prep.

And, of course, in the Dominican there are quite a few favorite Dominican players, but I think -- I'd have to think about the Venezuelan players first.

**Q. I think there is a play Venezuela and it is against Asian team. Can you tell us the difference between Asian players and Latin American players?**

SHOHEI OTANI: I don't think there is a huge difference. The rule is the same, what we're doing is the same. So I think each country has their particular characteristics, but I don't think there is a huge difference, depending on the country or anything like that. So I think everybody is simply trying to get the point, and that's the simple game. So I don't think there is a huge difference among them.

**Q. Three years ago I think you were the champion, and two years I think you were in -- also you achieved the 50/50 two years ago. And then you came back again, and you're facing this event. What is your psychological feeling? It's something that you don't pay attention to in the past or something you have achieved becomes the positive motivation?**

SHOHEI OTANI: This is the place I have very good memories. Of course, I'm not going to bring memories to the next game, but I think there is a very positive influence to myself. But this is a very beautiful stadium and the good weather. And I was just throwing, and of course I'll be practicing batting tomorrow. So I think the view will be a little bit different.

**Q. I think the recovery of the coach, I think he is going to let you walk all four chances, but what do you think about that, the strategy? Just simply tell me what you think about that strategy.**

SHOHEI OTANI: Well, of course, I think the special bat and batter, and I touched the base, so I think -- I hope I'll get the power from the bat. And if I couldn't hit it, I guess it is my fault.

**Q. This is the WBC, and you had quite a few selection**



**of great players three years ago. I think this lineup for the team players this time is as well, so I will feel -- but, of course, when you think about the development for the WBC or for the baseball, do you believe like you have to play well and just expand to the Japanese market? What do you think about that?**

SHOHEI OTANI: Of course, not just final game for that last year, but every game from countries, including the games in the Tokyo Dome. I was just watching, and every game is great. Every team is playing great.

So I think the more events that we have in the future, I think that everybody gets more and more excited. And players, regardless of the country, everybody plays. And the fans' excitement, and I'm hoping that we'll get more excited. I'll be happy if that happens.

**Q. I was watching the live pitching, and it looks like your preparing is going well. In this event, what do you think about the hitting balls and what do you think about if there's anything --**

SHOHEI OTANI: So far there was the contract with the team that was sent out, so there is no chance, I will not be able to pitch. So I think if I could -- of course, I have no idea how many players may have injured or how many injured players will show, but I don't think there is any chance to throw.

**Q. So what do you think about? Do you have any regret?**

SHOHEI OTANI: No, I don't have any regret. I really don't have any. So the job that I can do, I'm going to have to do.

Of course, even though I don't throw, there are plenty of great pitchers in the lineup and I'm very confident with those pitchers. And also, they're great pitchers. If we can show that we have great pitchers to other countries, that's what I would like to think.

**Q. Yesterday was a game between Venezuela and Dominican Republic, and Japan will have the chance to face another Latin American team. You're going to face Venezuela, but then you will face Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. So I would like to know your thoughts on how the Latin American baseball is played.**

SHOHEI OTANI: Of course, thinking about Japan and the U.S., it is a little bit different. Of course, after the home run and meeting them after the home run, I think they are great, I think the positive part of the Latin American culture. So of course we will be playing against the Venezuela

team. I think that country is different from Japan, so I'm looking forward to playing against other countries.

I think there are plenty of players on the team, so I'm looking forward to playing against them.

**Q. Japanese baseball is known by its discipline. Latino baseball is known by its passion. How do you compare those two kinds or styles of playing baseball?**

SHOHEI OTANI: Well, I don't know. So as I say, I really don't see much difference, you know? I think a difference in the people, but once it gets to the baseball, I think we play under the same rules, so I don't see much difference here. For the batter, if it's a ball or a strike or if it's a safe, I don't think there's much difference.

But, of course, the atmosphere on the bench or the way they celebrate playing and so forth, I think each country has their own unique way of doing it. But I think it's going to be fun.

So I think when you play baseball, I think that's kind of like a language, each unique language, so I like to experience that kind of differences.

**Q. Leadership is really important to you, it seems, with this team, whether it's your speech to the team in 2023 or picking Kitayama to come in to do the celebration. So I'm curious, why is this so important to you, and where did you learn this style? Maybe a veteran player who brought you under his wing or maybe somebody like Hideki Kuriyama.**

SHOHEI OTANI: Well, I think Iбата-san is a little bit different from (indiscernible.) So I think he is very cool and he is objectively looking at the game, so he's that kind of a manager. He's not the type that he's going to motivate the people with a strong language or anything like that, so he's not that type of person.

But all the players he selected is very excellent, so I don't think I'm going to have to motivate myself. I think each player is a well self-managed player. So I think each player is captain themselves and they're also a team captain as well. So I think this is the collective team of those people.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)