

World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals

Thursday, 12 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic

Manager Albert Pujols

Workout Day Press Conference



Q. How about the mindset versus Korea? What do you expect from Cristopher Sanchez, knowing in the second stage they can throw 80 pitches? Another question. Do you have a change with Augustin Ramirez? We'll see that tomorrow when you see the lineup.

ALBERT PUJOLS: First of all, good afternoon. Regarding Cristopher Sanchez, it's going to be his second performance. We have a game plan, and we hope that he's able to execute it. Then we'll be using the bullpen.

As we have been doing so far, it's been working really well, especially in these first four games, and we expect that everything goes well.

Q. Albert, you seem to really enjoy these home run celebrations that your players have had, these long jogs around the bases and stuff that they're doing. You came up in a time in Major League Baseball where guys didn't celebrate like that. How are you embracing this and enjoying the way they're doing it?

ALBERT PUJOLS: It's different. It's a different tournament. You're representing your country. You only get to do this -- when I started, it was every four years. Now it's every three years. So anytime you wear this jersey, it's with a lot of honor, and you're one of the best to perform in this level.

In the regular season I don't think you're going to see anything like what we're doing here, but I think everybody understands it, you know? And I don't have any problem with that, and I'm sure other people don't have any problem.

I mean, everybody's celebrating. You watch Puerto Rico, you watch Mexico, even Italy, U.S., everybody's got something going on.

Do we do it more than others? Yes. Does it mean that we care more? No. That's our culture and that's who we are. We don't want to change who we are just because of this tournament.

Q. Concerning Korea, a different team, how about them, and how about the training today for defense? Can you give us more explanation regarding the training?

ALBERT PUJOLS: Not only the responsibility that we have as staff to win this tournament and the players, it is important to keep the players healthy. So we don't want them to have problems after just the season is about to start. It is our job to keep these players healthy as a usual routine and training.

Of course, we know that these games are played at the higher level, but mentally and physically speaking, we want to have them prepared as if it is their daily routine. This is part of our responsibility, to send the players back to their organizations in good health. And winning at the tournament, of course.

Nothing happened at the game yesterday, so everything was planned. We had today, the day off, and we wanted to train.

We have a plan. We put together the plan. We take a look at the schedule. We wish to have more time, but we don't. We try to take advantage of the time we have. We do whatever we can to prepare the players.

Regarding the game plan for tomorrow, there is not a lot of information yet, but my guys have been doing a great job. So far we have a scout team that has been sending good reports, and when the game starts, we can make the necessary adjustments to win the game.

Q. How important is it to have a pitcher that is able to pitch so that the rival hits ground balls? Is that important for the game tomorrow?

ALBERT PUJOLS: I think that our structure is that we have a very good offense, a good bullpen, and a very good defense, both in the infield and the outfield.



So when you play this kind of a short tournament, you have to take advantage of all the mistakes made by the rival. You try to minimize your own mistakes.

So far, our team has shown great defense, including our captain, Machado. We call him the minister of defense. He's been doing great plays on the third base.

And myself and the staff, we have to prepare the guys for them to be ready for the games. I am not going to teach them how to play baseball. They know how to do that. We are just here to prepare them to be ready. If they need anything during the game, we are here for that.

So far, it's been a pleasure for us to see those guys, how they deliver, how they behave, and the joy and the emotions that they are feeling.

Q. All the attention of the Dominican team of yours is focused on Korea, but there is a shared feeling. Some teams in Houston, specifically Italy with Cervelli and Mark with the United States have been speaking of the potential of facing the Dominican Republic, to come to Miami and to face the DR. DeRosa spoke of the relationship he has with you. So how do you feel as a manager of the DR knowing that there are other teams paying attention and wish to face the team in the next stages.

ALBERT PUJOLS: This is nothing new. As we participate, everyone wants to beat the DR. They all want to face us.

Personally speaking, we are focused -- and the same goes for the players and the coaching staff. We just want to face the next team, in this case Korea. We'll do our best to get a win, and then we focus on the team on Sunday, no matter the team we are going to face with the lineup we have with our team that we put together, we have a great team that could face any other team.

So my job as a manager is to prepare those guys. And I have to thank God because of the privilege that I have and having this coaching staff. They have been helping the guys as well.

Q. It seems to me that these guys have been together for over two weeks because of the relationships, the bonds, the links between them. That's what I can see from outside. How is that process after four official games here in Miami? And if you could do a ranking of the best celebration of the home runs hit by the DR, Vladdy, Tatis, and Oneil?

ALBERT PUJOLS: No. You do the ranking after each

game. Come on. I'm the manager. I'm not going to speak about celebration, but I want them to celebrate tomorrow as well.

We have a great leadership in the clubhouse. We have been together for one week, two weeks. I don't know. But we have a great leadership with Manny, the two Juniors, Vladdy, Sandy. We have a great group of baseball players. They have a WhatsApp group, you know? They removed me from that group, by the way.

And they have been preparing themselves. That started actually last year in February. Speaking about the team, how to put together that team, it was just kind of bitter of myself as a fan and our country, we lived a very bitter experience in 2023. I would say even shameful. And these guys activated, you know, and they started to train very early to get ready for this tournament.

So everyone speaks about the union, but we have a great leadership. This is being built during months, you know, with a federation manager, the coaching staff, et cetera. They have beautiful bonds, you know, in the team.

We have talented players, and this is something that we share with them and with you, is that, yes, we do have talented players and it's very important to win, but it is important to have a united group to win championships. That's our goal, to help each other, to have great communication. If Soto, Vladdy, Machado, if they fail, they speak about the pitches, the pitcher. You don't teach that, you know? That comes from the heart, and that's the responsibility that we all have to win this tournament.

Q. Albert, what would you analyze are team Korea's biggest strengths?

ALBERT PUJOLS: I mean, I think that with them, they're just going to play their game. They're just disciplined at the plate. They don't make that many mistakes. And we're going to be ready. We're going to be ready for them.

I think that overall they play the game clean. We want to make sure that we don't make mistakes. We want to make sure that we're ready to go. I mean, a lot of different ways. They like to play small ball, hit and run, whatever that is. And they're going to try to score runs however they can and try to beat us.

And for myself, making sure that our guys are prepared to compete, which we've been showing that since everybody showed up a couple weeks ago.

So I'm really excited about the match tomorrow. I know there's not a lot of information and data that we have, but

we're also going to trust our gift that we have and the report that they have given to us and try to come up with the best game plan to come up with a win tomorrow.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)

