

# World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals 1 - Korea vs Dominican Republic

Friday, 13 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Dominican Republic Manager Albert Pujols

### Postgame Press Conference

Dominican Republic 10, Korea 0

**Q. Can you tell me about the game? We are continuing practicing. We are doing everything perfectly well. Who's going to be the next pitcher by the DR?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Severino. Good evening, by the way. Severino will be our next pitcher.

And to continue executing the same game plan, we hope that Severino is able to pitch for three, four innings, and then we call the bullpen.

**Q. The plan for today was totally different. Cristopher was in his slider and changeup. How did you prepare for this team that you didn't know so much? He said against Nicaragua that he was not feeling very well.**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Cristopher is one of the best pitchers last year. The way he prepares, the way he works. He made the necessary adjustments for this game. And the same for the offense. We didn't have a lot of information about Korea, but you prepare the way you can.

Cristopher did a great job. He pitched five innings. He threw 62 or 63 pitches, so below the 55 he was supposed to pitch. He did a great job. We're very happy about that.

And then we called the bullpen. Abreu did a great job. I wanted to give him more innings to other pitchers, but I am not going to complain the way we won the game.

**Q. Albert, Austin Wells came from the bench. He hit a homer, game over. I think that you have two different teams -- I mean, two teams in the clubhouse. How did you manage the substitutions, and tell me about Brayan Bello vis-a-vis a possible final.**



ALBERT PUJOLS: Well, I talked about Brayan Bello in the morning. He's back to his team in Boston. He will be with us on Sunday. Boston is putting him tomorrow to pitch. It was a hard position for him and for the team, but we have to think about this. Boston has a plan for him. And Boston requested him, and he has to prepare himself for this season. So we are very sorry because he had to leave yesterday night. But he will be with us, I hope, on Sunday after he pitches tomorrow.

**Q. In the case of Cristopher, you spoke about the 62 pitches. He used that game plan of five innings, and that's it, or is it possible for Cristopher to participate in a final game? In the case of Caminero, you removed him early. Is that because of a health condition, or you just told him --**

ALBERT PUJOLS: That's it, two hits, and I wanted him to feel well.

I think we have a great chemistry, you know, in the team, and I respect all the guys a lot, and they respect me as well. So that's the most important thing, the communication that we have.

I told Caminero I would like to give Oneil a chance for him to play, and he said, "You are the boss. You do whatever you want." And that was the case.

And regarding Cristopher, you saw his performance. You will see him in the opening day as well. And in his last appearance, he threw 45 pitches. Now we wanted him to pitch for 65, around 65 pitches. And then in the next round he can pitch 80. That was the plan that we discussed with Wellington and his organization, and we promised them that he wouldn't pitch more than 65 pitches.

Thank God, he pitched very well at five innings, great performance.

The team is able to score runs in different ways. The homer was hit at the end, but you already had seven runs. Speaking about Vladimir Guerrero and Juan Soto, maybe they are not the faster runners, but they were so aggressive on the bases. Just like you said, when you have this kind of team that can damage you, not only with

a bat, but the way they play so aggressively, they know about the importance of this tournament for themselves, for the country, for our homeland. And at the same time, they respect baseball, and they are going to play baseball the way it is supposed to be played, taking advantage of the mistakes of the rivals.

I would say more than the talent that we have in the team, it is not easy to see a pitcher for the second time. I mean, these guys are professional.

Tatis -- what can I tell you? What can I say? He was a strikeout in the first at-bat, but he saw nine or ten different pitches.

This is not an easy game, but when a pitcher is tired in the first or after the first inning and you have a lineup like ours, it's going to be difficult for the pitcher. This is what they have been doing so far, and I hope they continue doing that.

**Q. The main question: Winning today, not only the way you won by the mercy rule, what's the message that you are sending to the other teams?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: There is no message. There is no message at all. Our job is to win every single game no matter the team we face, and to prepare the guys. My message to my team, to my staff is that we have a mission that is to win a championship, and this is our goal. Our concern is not what the other teams are doing.

In the days off, we prepare ourselves. We train for the next game.

**Q. Albert, now that you've made it this far in the tournament, have you given much thought about facing Ohtani in the finals?**

A I just answered that question in Spanish. I don't think about the future. I think about the present. My job as a manager, the staff that I have he is to play the game no matter who we face.

I'm not a guy that loves to think about too much, because sometimes as a human being, how we are, sometimes it doesn't go the way we want to. You don't feel good about it, and I don't like that feeling. So I just live one day at a time, one inning at a time, and you let God take control.

And that's who I am, and that's what I try to teach these guys. Hey, man, keep pushing, keep pushing.

Now we're in a situation where you can't lose. You lose and you go home. So we know that we are so close, but

we still haven't got there yet, but hopefully we get there and we finish what we came to.

**Q. Congrats for the next round. I know that you live one day at a time with today's victory. The Dominican team -- now you need Venezuela or Canada for you to lose to pass to the Olympics or to qualify to the Olympics. Have you been thinking about that, that you can help this team to go to the Olympics?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: I haven't thought about it. My goal, my mindset is focused on the World Classic. We've got to do our job. This is our mission, this is our task.

And that will be just a consequence. The goal is the tournament. We don't wish bad luck to the other teams or Venezuela or Canada. If you do your job, you don't have to take care of the others, but my goal has been the Classic. If we can give that chance to our country to be in the Olympics, that could be a great success.

But I don't like thinking about the future. I'm focused on the present.

**Q. You are the manager, and I think there were two names listed, Japan and the DR. And when you play against Japan, do you think you're going to have the same kind of a press conference after you play?**

A I couldn't hear anything. Did you hear anything?

**Q. There is the best team, according to the management, the Dominican and Japan are the best teams, and do you think after you play tomorrow, do you think you're going to be happy to be talking to us tomorrow after the game?**

A Guys, no sweat, but I feel like the guy who was just translate, he was running a mile. So no disrespect, but I'm sorry. I'm sorry, guys. I can't hear well. Sorry. Oh, I see.

The question was the -- if I'm be happy to play with Japan? Okay. Hold on. The question was if I was -- if after we play Japan, if I was going to feel happy like I am today.

The answer is no. Just because we win the United States or Japan when we play on Sunday, no. We just have to win two games yet to win this tournament, and this is our goal, one game at a time. And we hope to make it to the final and win that game as well.

My goal is to continue to prepare these guys, really, to win game by game like we have. I think we are close to accomplish what we want, which is winning the tournament. But we are two games away, and we are

going to take it one game at a time, how we're doing.

And I think after Tuesday, you're going to see either we're there, hopefully a happy team, not a sad team. And hopefully I'm on the happy side on Tuesday.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports).

