

# World Baseball Classic: Quarterfinals 4 - Venezuela vs Japan

Sunday, 15 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Venezuela

Wilyer Abreau

Ronald Acuna Jr.

Ezequiel Tovar

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela 8, Japan 5

**Q. Wilyer, question for you. When you hit the homer, that was incredible, of course. But when you were running the bases, what crossed your mind during those seconds when you were running the bases? What crossed your mind?**

WILYER ABREU: That's really difficult what crosses my mind. Many things cross my mind. It's so fast. It's a great feeling, something that I wouldn't imagine and very difficult to describe. It's a unique moment and one of the best moments that I have had in my career.

**Q. Question for the three of you. You were important for this win in your individual careers and for the Venezuelan baseball. What would you put this game? How can you now stay focused on Italy?**

EZEQUIEL TOVAR: To me personally, it's one of the most important games that I have been participating in.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: The same to me. Maybe the most important game. When we went to the World Series, I wasn't there. Thank God I'm living this great moment in my career.

WILYER ABREU: And in my case, one of the most exciting games that I have had, the vibes that we felt on the field were incredible from the fans, both the Japanese and the Venezuelan fans.

**Q. And for the Venezuelan baseball, what does this game mean?**



RONALD ACUNA JR.: People have faith in us during ups and downs. They believe in us. It's great to give this joy to our country.

**Q. Your manager was speaking about the planning. You looked great against Yamamoto, especially you, Ezequiel. You hit him very well. Tell me about the confidence when they communicated to you that you would be facing Yamamoto.**

EZEQUIEL TOVAR: Yeah, I have faced him a couple of times in the Majors. We shared the game plan, and it was good.

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Just like Ezequiel said, our plan was to attack the pitching, and we had good execution, and thank God we were able to win.

**Q. The Venezuelan people needed that joy, that happiness, and for the Venezuelan baseball, for you with Ohtani, you are the first in the WBC, the first bats to hit homers in the first inning. You celebrated that homer a lot. And then in the right field when Ohtani hit the homer, you had your hands on your knees. What crossed your mind?**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Many emotions, you know? Ohtani's a global superstar. He's a phenomenon. But that's part of the game, you know? But like I said before, very happy to win.

**Q. We were speaking about this game and what it meant for your career. Moscow 1980, soccer, volleyball qualified for the Olympics, now baseball has been qualified to the Olympics. How could you call this national team that was qualified to 2028 L.A. This is history. What does this mean to you? The three of you, the heroes of this game, what does that win mean to you guys? You are now writing history being qualified for the Olympics?**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Like I said before, you are right, this is history for us and for our country. We have been working on a daily basis to give this joy to our country. But the job is not completed, we have two games to win.



WILYER ABREU: I believe that this means a lot to us Venezuelans for the country. Venezuela has participated in the Olympics in other categories and other sports, but we are trying to write our own history. Our team is well-prepared. Like Ronald said, the job is not completed. We have more to do.

EZEQUIEL TOVAR: And I think that in Venezuela, everyone is celebrating, dancing on the streets.

**Q. It was a very exciting game with some ups and downs. You eliminated Japan, three-time WBC champion. What was the next exciting part of the game?**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: I think that everything that all the players did, every play is exciting whether I had a homer or Maikel. But the most emotion, exciting part was when we made the last out.

**Q. Congrats on the win, going to the semifinals and qualification to the Olympic Games. Is this an extra motivation? I mean, beating Japan, and regarding the next game against Italy?**

EZEQUIEL TOVAR: Our motivation comes from God. God is our basis, our foundation. We have faith, and we believe in ourselves.

Like I said, this is not the end, this is not over. We have to beat Italy and then the next team.

**Q. Speaking about God, do you think that that was the difference to continue moving, winning, and to write history? Do you think that that's the key factor?**

EZEQUIEL TOVAR: God is everything. Nothing can happen like this. I really believe that everything happens for a reason, and we hope that God continues helping us.

WILYER ABREU: Yes, I do believe that God has put us here. He has a plan with all of us as a collective and individually. The whole team is thanking God for putting us in this situation and for this opportunity to represent our country.

**Q. Venezuela is super excited and super happy for your achievement today. Previous legends of baseball were not able to achieve this. How do you feel like that? And how about feeling the emotion at this stadium, hearing the chants and the celebration of the Venezuelan fans?**

WILYER ABREU: I think that the crowd today and every game that we have played in this WBC, the fans have been

great, incredible. You can feel the vibes. You can feel the support from the stands and from all the Venezuelans at home watching the game on TV.

Yes, that is an extra motivation for us because we know that all Venezuelans are supporting us.

**Q. Taking a look at the Latino teams and the good results in all the games, do you think that Latino baseball is living its best moment?**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Latin baseball has always had some ups and downs. Those before us opened the doors for us today, and we're opening the doors for the upcoming generations.

**Q. Sorry, I'm talking about today. There was Japan, and the pitcher was Yamamoto. The pitcher was Yamamoto playing against Japan. Before the game started, did you think we were going to have that many runs in this game playing against Japan and Yamamoto?**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: Of course. That's the most important thing, to damage the pitcher against us. Yamamoto is a superstar, a great pitcher, but thank God we were able to win.

Who is going to translate that?

WILYER ABREU: Yeah, we had a very good game plan against Yamamoto, and it was very well executed. He is one of the best pitches in the Majors. We tried to get him tired so that he had to throw as many pitches as possible to get rid of him and then face the rest of the bullpen.

EZEQUIEL TOVAR: The plan against Yamamoto or any other pitcher is to try to score runs.

**Q. We have seen you more patient. Yamamoto had to throw so many pitches, especially Tovar. But in the sixth inning, the homer just changed the game and changed the spirit in the dugout. Today you were playing at home, even when he said that the fans have been noisy, today we were able to hear the noise. They were much noisier today. That sixth inning changed the game.**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: No, I don't think so. We just came back, thank Wilyer, but we were aware. We were conscious that we were getting closer in this score. We had a game plan that we executed very effectively.

WILYER ABREU: What really changed the game was when Maikel hit the homer. We approached only one run

behind and the morale, the spirit of the team was very high.  
We were confident that we could win the game after that  
homer.

**Q. Ronald, I think you were upset because of that  
swing. Were you so upset during the whole game?**

RONALD ACUNA JR.: No. Some things, you cannot  
contain yourself. I was upset. But the most important thing  
is that we were able to win.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)